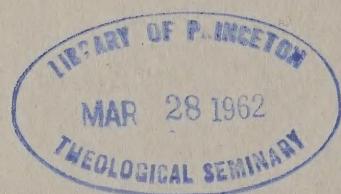


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OF THE WEST OF ENGLAND

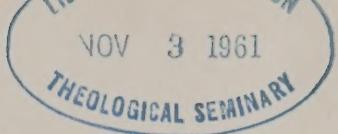
A Study of the Changing Pattern of Social Aspirations
in Bristol and Somerset, 1480–1660

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THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY
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PREFACE

This study bears a direct relationship to a larger work now in progress. The first volume, published in 1959 under the title, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660*, was an essay commenting on evidence drawn from ten English counties (among them Bristol and Somerset) which together comprised something like a third of the land mass of the realm, about a third of the population in 1600, and perhaps half of the wealth of England in the age with which we are concerned. An effort was made to assess the social problems of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, to describe the nature of the problem of poverty in this era, and to trace out the heroic measures which men took to secure its control, if not its cure. Though important remedial legislation was enacted, it was our conclusion that men of the age reposed their principal confidence in private charity, gathered in charitable trusts into large and disciplined aggregates of wealth with which extremely effective and enduring social institutions could be founded and maintained. Men of the age by their own efforts and with their own substance gained a large measure of control over the spreading and chronic social blight of poverty and, more importantly, went far towards securing its prevention by a vast enlargement of the ambit of social and economic opportunity.

The reader of this essay may wish to refer to that volume for a fuller explanation of the historical method employed, for comment on its limitations, and for certain conclusions based upon large masses of evidence drawn from the ten selected counties, among which Bristol and Somerset are numbered. In particular, we would emphasize the comments made there on the decline in the purchasing power of money through most of our period, which affects, of course, the statistical evidence presented throughout this work. Generally, however, it may be said that the philanthropic impulse was derived from many sources during our period and that it evoked a steadily and rapidly mounting charitable response which reached a great climax of giving in the first generation of the seventeenth century, when, it is not too much to say, the basic institutions of the modern society were securely established. Men's aspirations underwent a notable metamorphosis in the century following the English Reformation, an almost complete absorption with the secular and visible needs of the society marking this transformation. All regions and all classes yielded, rapidly or reluctantly as the case might be, to these powerful forces of change and to the resolution to build a better, a more comfortable, and a more civilized habitation for mankind.

The second volume of the larger study was published in 1960 under the title, *The Charities of London, 1480-1660: The Aspirations and the Achievements of the Urban Society*. This work was concerned with the

immensely important contribution of London to the social and moral betterment of the whole kingdom, as London's great and generous wealth flowed out to form new institutions and to safeguard mankind against the terrors of poverty, disease, and ignorance. London, in terms of its size, its wealth, and its lusty confidence, was an urban colossus fixed in what can only be described as a rural setting on a national scale. In this second volume we sought to comment on the vast charitable contribution which London made, to describe at some length the corporate social philosophy of the merchant aristocracy which ordered its affairs, and to measure the social dominance gained by London in this era, as the flood of its charitable generosity literally poured out across the face of the whole realm.

The series will be concluded with a third volume in which three diverse and widely separated rural counties (Buckinghamshire, Norfolk, and Yorkshire) are studied in detail. Here we shall observe a quite different pattern of social aspirations, a slower yielding to the secular metamorphosis which marks our period, and a surviving parochialism which is most dissimilar to the almost evangelical concern of London with the whole society.

Of the counties which remain, Bristol and Somerset together form an important and a unique entity, well deserving separate treatment and consideration. Bristol, as compared with London, was small, but it was nonetheless throughout our period one of the three or four truly urban complexes in England, and it was dominated by an urban aristocracy of very great vitality, boldness, and imagination. Miracles of social and institutional achievement were wrought by these men in their beloved city in the span of a little more than a century. Somerset, lying next this thriving city, remained notwithstanding one of the most completely rural counties in the realm and exhibited a quite different trend of social and historical development under a wholly different kind of leadership. In microcosm, we have here a social laboratory, as it were, in which we may observe the metamorphosis which occurred as the urban aristocracy of Bristol and the landed gentry of Somerset—the two classes in which the dominant thrust of historical change and social transformation is to be observed in the early modern era—molded and remade the two societies in terms of their own aspirations over a span of not quite two centuries.

The writer is deeply indebted to the American Philosophical Society for a generous grant which enabled him to complete in England the research on Bristol materials and substantially to advance that carried forward in Somerset. He is also most grateful to that old and eminent Society for its assistance in the publication of this essay under its distinguished imprint.

W. K. J.

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NOTE ON THE CONVENTIONS EMPLOYED

In the key tables on which this study rests we have been obliged for statistical reasons to follow quite arbitrary conventions which do some violence not only to the usual chronological divisions but also to historical facts. The period covered extends from 1480 through 1660, beginning some years before the triumph of Henry Tudor and including as well some months of the period after the restoration of the monarchy. This was regarded as essential for statistical and comparative purposes, since thereby the accumulation of benefactions and their analysis could be made in decade intervals for the whole of the long era under study.

Useful as are the decade intervals in which we have assembled our data, they are relatively unimportant as compared with the more generally recognized historical periods of our era into which our material has been aggregated and among which useful and most revealing comparisons and changes may be observed. But since the decade intervals must be kept intact, we have necessarily in this basic scheme of organization done some violence not only to convention but to fact. The period 1480-1540 has been called with reasonable accuracy "The Pre-Reformation Era" and, as with the other periods, will ordinarily be mentioned without repeated and certainly monotonous reference to the dates with which it is defined. The years 1541-1560 have been described somewhat inexactly as "The Age of the Reformation," while "The Age of Elizabeth" has been foreshortened to the four decades, 1561-1600. The period 1601-1640 has been regarded as "The Early Stuart Period," while the remaining two decades have been described as "The Revolutionary Era."

These divisions, in addition to being methodologically desirable, have the further merit, for purposes of statistical convenience, of establishing successive chronological units of 60, 20, 40, 40, and 20 years, which may, of course, be easily and accurately compared in various ways.

We have sought to examine all the relevant printed sources as well as the principal manuscript materials, with the result that the bibliographical apparatus is large. Since it seems not practicable to present a formal bibliography, full bibliographical particulars are given in the footnotes in the instance of a first citation, a short title form being employed thereafter. No biographical notes have been provided when the subject is treated in a *Dictionary of National Biography* memoir unless it has seemed desirable to suggest a correction or to add new particulars. The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes for manuscript materials and for frequently cited printed sources:

DNB—*Dictionary of National Biography*.

Egerton MS.—Egerton Manuscripts, British Museum, 2044: 5. A register of several wills and gifts made to Bristol to pious uses since 1532.

PCC—Prerogative Court of Canterbury.

PCY—Prerogative Court of York.

PP—*Parliamentary Papers, Charity Commissioners' Reports*.

S.P.Dom.—State Papers, Domestic.

VCH, Gloucs.—*Victoria history of the county of Gloucester*.

VCH, Somerset—*Victoria history of the county of Somerset*.

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A Study of the Changing Pattern of Social Aspirations in Bristol and Somerset, 1480-1660

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I. INTRODUCTION

Bristol and Somerset lie together as a geographical entity in the west of England. They possessed more economic and perhaps more historical importance in the seventeenth century than in our own age, though they stood distant and remote from London, in which so much of the political, the commercial, and the cultural power of the early modern era was centered. Bristol commanded the great Severn Valley and gained a considerable economic hegemony over the west of England generally until her commercial greatness began gradually to fall away before our period was out, as the vast power and the aggressive activities of London's merchants began to invade and then to absorb an economic region which Bristol had long regarded as her own. Somerset in her turn was the leading as she was the most populous county in southwestern England. Closely linked with adjoining Bristol by many ties, she nonetheless stood remarkably clear of the economic domination of her ambitious neighbor. Somerset possessed several, though small, market towns

of her own, two of which were considerable centers of capital as well as of trade, while her once sparse ties with London were augmented and strengthened in the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Neighbors though they were, both Bristol and Somerset remained remarkably parochial in their social and cultural development, with, as we shall see, little of aid or of emulation flowing from the one to the other.

In microcosm we may find in Bristol and Somerset the principal economic and social forces which were molding England in the early modern age into a new and a very different society. Bristol was a city, of the second or third rank in England during the whole course of our period, in which the distinctly urban aspirations of the society reached an early and a remarkably mature development. Her concerns were those of a merchant aristocracy which was intensely secular in its aspirations, audacious in its vision, and serenely self-confident in its purposes. A small but a most able and devoted mercantile elite was to re-fashion with its own dedicated charitable wealth the social and cultural institutions of the city in the course of a little more than a century. Somerset, in contrast, was an agrarian county which, despite a considerable growth in its trade and industry, remained at the close of our period an almost classically rural society, dominated by older and more conservative classes of men and without the great store of fluid, of viable, wealth with which the men of Bristol were to create a new society. They stand, therefore, in almost perfect historical contrast.

It is our estimate that the population of the two counties, for Bristol enjoyed the proud title of county as well as of city, when taken together was of the order of 135,000 in 1600. At no time, it seems certain, did Bristol ever possess more than a sixth of the total population of the area. We shall be concerned with the charitable benefactions and interests of 4,160 donors who made contribution to the building of the social institutions of the two counties, of which, it may be observed, not much more than an eighth (12.76 per cent) were citizens of Bristol. Somerset was, then, in every sense the larger, the more massive, entity. Yet Bristol's great qualitative strength, her immense generosity, are suggested when we say that her average charitable benefaction reached the amazingly high figure of £173.6s.9d., whereas that of Somerset stood at only £32.2s.3d. The merchants of Bristol knew

quite precisely what they wanted their city to become and they were prepared to build her social institutions with their own private resources.

In the course of our period Somerset and Bristol were together to accumulate charitable resources totaling £208,574.2s., of which Bristol, relatively small though she was, mustered the remarkably high proportion of 44.13 per cent of the whole great sum. The total of charitable wealth disposed by the two counties was very large in terms of seventeenth-century purchasing power, and with it bold, healing, and revolutionary achievements were to be made which transformed the society in both counties. Great though this liquid, this powerful, charitable wealth was, it was tiny indeed as compared with the immense sum which London disposed, amounting to little more than a tithe (11.04 per cent) of London's vast charitable resources. But London stood quite alone both in her wealth and in her generosity, a kind of monadnock dominating the whole of the English social landscape. More relevantly, Bristol and Somerset together in 1660 possessed considerably greater charitable resources than did Norfolk (£177,883.11s.), though Norfolk's principal city, Norwich, had long rivaled Bristol in population if not in vigor. These resources, with which both change and progress were to be gained, were substantially smaller than those possessed by Kent (£251,766.12s.), certainly after London the richest county in the realm, and those of Yorkshire (£243,650.14s.), with her vast area and her considerably greater population. To the annal of the slow process of accumulation of these great charitable resources and of their beneficent uses we may now turn.

II. BRISTOL

A. THE CITY

Bristol was the one large urban center in sixteenth-century England which owed its importance to trade alone. It was not a shire town; no famous monastic establishment had seeded its growth; it was to gain a cathedral church in the middle of the sixteenth century only after it had already attained its status as the third city in the realm. But it was perfectly situated as a hub for medieval commerce and, after the opening up of overseas exploration and trade, was to find itself endowed with an incomparable location facing out to the new trade routes and with mature commercial and maritime traditions and skills.

Bristol lay in a valley floor of the Avon, about four miles in diameter, only seven miles above the point where the river opens into the great Severn Estuary and the Bristol Channel. The ebb and flow of the great tides of the Estuary swept in and out of the Avon which, with the Frome, provided a broad flooded sea pool to receive, in Camden's words "vessels under sail into the very heart of the city." The city was also favored by its command of a great river system

fanning out deep into Wales and the Midlands and by its relatively good overland communications with London and with the southwest. Geographically, its position in the west of England bears a striking resemblance to that of London in the more populous and mature eastern reaches of the realm.

The development of Bristol during the earlier centuries of the Middle Ages was very slow, it having then ranked far below Gloucester and Worcester in commercial importance. The town's first charter dates from the reign of Henry II, though its larger enfranchisement as a borough did not come until the very close (1190) of the twelfth century. Bristol's first considerable commercial prosperity came at about this time when it opened an ever-expanding trade, especially in wool, with Ireland, establishing complex and enduring commercial ties, particularly with Dublin, which were to bring great benefits. The first merchant guild was established in the mid-thirteenth century (1242), while a few years later (1247) most important betterments were undertaken when a new course was cut for the Frome, much improving the harbor and wharfage, and a stone bridge was thrown across the Avon to bind the Temple and Redcliffe more closely with the town. Shortly afterwards, trade relations were opened with western France, and before the close of the century Bristol had become a principal center for the Gascony wine trade.

What was still a relatively unimportant trading town was transformed during a period of about a century (1350-1450) into one of the largest, one of the richest, and certainly the most aggressive of the half dozen urban complexes in England. This remarkable metamorphosis of a small town into a city was the consequence of a most energetic exploitation of Bristol's commercial connections with its own great hinterland and the development of an almost precocious industrial revolution within the city itself. In 1353 Bristol became a staple town and was by that date in the midst of a tremendous expansion of its own cloth-making industries, particularly the making of the broadcloths for which it was to become famous. In somewhat less than a half-century (1356-1396) its own production of broadcloths was almost doubled,¹ while the city served as the outlet for the cloth trade which was expanding quite as rapidly in the western counties. During this period Bristol was itself exporting nearly a third (32.3 per cent) of all broadcloths being shipped abroad and had firmly established itself as the commercial and exporting center for much of the Cotswold area, most of Wales, Warwickshire, the north and east of Devon, and for the west of England generally. These great developments were recognized in 1373 when the corporate bounds were extended to include Redcliffe and when Bristol was constituted a county.

¹ Darby, H. C., ed., *An historical geography of England before A.D. 1800*, 286n., Cambridge, The University Press, 1951.

A few years later (1377) the poll-tax returns give us a reasonably accurate measure of the transformation that had occurred. These data suggest a population of between 9,500 and 10,000 for Bristol, establishing it solidly as the third city of the realm, after London, with perhaps 37,000, and York, with something like 11,000 inhabitants.²

The fifteenth century witnessed a further considerable expansion of the trade of the city, though there is evidence that the cloth manufacturing within the city proper was now stabilized and that the population was increasing only gradually. The great merchant William Canyng (1399-1474) opened a large and most lucrative cloth trade with the Baltic in this era and laid the foundations for the amazing tradition of civic responsibility which was to characterize his class during the whole of our period of study. There is impressive evidence that this was an era when the merchant class of the city was rapidly accumulating capital which was to be employed for the immense commercial exploits of the sixteenth century.

In the early sixteenth century Bristol with a population of possibly 11,000 to 13,000 was still the third city in the realm.³ The sixteenth-century city, already spilling out into suburbs, was comprised of seventeen parishes, with something like two-thirds of the population concentrated (1550) in the six parishes of St. Nicholas, St. Thomas, St. Mary Redcliffe, St. James, St. Philip, and the Temple. The city was ringed about with monastic establishments, with which it got on rather badly, most of whose property it was able to purchase at the time of the Dissolution at the nominal price of £1,790, thus freeing itself from constriction and, incidentally, from the plague of monastic tolls just as its second period of great growth set in.⁴ Led by a numerous, a rich, and a responsible mercantile aristocracy, the city undertook an immense commercial expansion in which the famous exploratory voyages financed in Bristol may be regarded as risk capital undertakings designed to open up new frontiers of trade. The merchant adventurers, whose lives and contributions will be more fully sketched in later pages, were speculators prepared to take tremendous risks to secure the exploitation of the great geographical advantages enjoyed by Bristol as it faced out towards the new and expanding horizons of the New World. Lucrative new trade routes were opened with Spain, with the Spanish colonies, with Newfoundland, and with Africa, where pious Bristol merchants developed special skills and were to gain enormous profits in the slave trade.

² *Ibid.*, 233; Usher, A. P., *An introduction to the industrial history of England*, 106, Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1920. Usher interprets these data to yield: London 37,202; York 11,597; Bristol 10,152.

³ The return of "houseling people" under the Chantry Act of 1544 suggests, with an estimate for St. Augustine's parish, something under 12,000.

⁴ Rowse, A. L., *The England of Elizabeth*, 177, London, Macmillan, 1950.

As the relative importance of the city in cloth-making began slowly to decline, new industries, particularly soap manufacturing and sugar refining, were developed as well as a quite amazing number of specialized crafts to supply the needs of the hinterland and of Bristol's own merchant marine.⁵

The city found itself and established its own institutions during these sixteenth-century decades when it possessed all the characteristics of what an American must describe as a "boom town." It grew rapidly in size, attaining a population of from 15,000 to 17,000 by 1600, when it had replaced York and Norwich as the second city in the realm. During the whole course of the century its great merchant families provided confident and bold leadership for the city, while establishing themselves as men of great substance whose exploits and generosity were admired even by their richer and more numerous peers from London. This merchant aristocracy was recruited to an amazing extent, compared with London, from the vigorous population of the city itself and from the hinterland over which it now enjoyed a commercial and, to a degree, a cultural dominance. Thus in the decade 1532-1542, of the 1371 apprentices enrolled, from whom the next generation of merchants and tradesmen was to be recruited, almost a third (29.47 per cent) were drawn from the city itself, while two-thirds were gained from Bristol, Gloucestershire, Wales, and Somerset in that order. And if the whole of the commercial ambit of the city is taken in view, including Ireland, from which fifty-five apprentices came, nearly 90 per cent of its future civic leaders were drawn from the great western area of which it was now truly the capital.⁶

Our own evidence would suggest that a decline in the fortunes of the city had already set in by 1630, when cloth-making fell upon hard days, when the ancient trade with Ireland began to crumble, and when the rising market towns of Somerset and the nearer Midlands began to chip away at its commercial and entrepreneurial dominance. Great and bold fortunes were no longer being made and the quality of mercantile leadership was evidently declining. Thus it is

⁵ Little, B. D. G., *The city and county of Bristol*, 115-116, London, Laurie, 1954.

⁶ The figures, derived from the table in *Bristol Record Society* 14: 197, 1948, are as follows:

Bristol	404
Gloucestershire	185
Wales	174
Somerset	147
Shropshire	75
Worcestershire	72
Ireland	55
Staffordshire	41
Lancashire	30
Herefordshire	28

No other English county contributed more than twenty apprentices in this decade.

most significant that, of the huge charitable contributions made by the merchant class of the city, 37.07 per cent were vested in the Elizabethan decades as compared with 29.93 per cent in the equally long early Stuart era. This decline was slow and almost imperceptible, but it has meaning when we compare it with the burgeoning prosperity and growth of London in the first half of the seventeenth century. But these difficulties were mild compared with those experienced by the city during the revolutionary decades. Bristol's trade was most seriously disrupted and the normal routines of its commercial and industrial life were paralyzed by the successive sieges to which it was subjected.⁷ During the whole of this interval, the accumulations of charitable benefactions amounted to only 6.2 per cent of the whole for our period, or not much more than a third of the amount provided by donors in the years prior to the Reformation and only a fifth of the sums given during the early Stuart years. An era of decline was well under way from which Bristol was not to begin its recovery until well after the period with which we are concerned in this study.

B. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DATA

The city of Bristol during the course of our period was to accumulate extraordinarily rich resources with which to build and endow its social and charitable institutions. In all 531 of its citizens vested it with the very large total of £92,042.6s. of charitable resources. This is a truly enormous total when we consider that it was wholly and solidly vested for the support of the institutions and needs of a city whose population probably ranged between 11,000 and 20,000 during the interval under consideration. The magnitude of this achievement appears all the more remarkable when we reflect that this sum was far larger than the whole of the charitable endowments of the county of Worcestershire and somewhat greater than the accumulations in the rich and populous counties of Buckinghamshire and Hampshire, not to mention that it may be most favorably compared with the totals for such counties as Lancashire and Somerset.⁸ Without doubt Bristol by 1660 disposed charitable endowments exceeding those possessed by a full third of all the counties of England, bespeaking the restless vigor with which the merchant aristocracy in all cities undertook the framing and the endowment of the institutions of modern society. Moreover, Bristol stood clearly and proudly as the second city of the realm in the great charitable funds which it possessed, though its resources seem trivial indeed when compared with the immensity of London's generosity, which, for ex-

ample, disposed more for the needs of the county of Kent alone than the total of Bristol's own charitable funds. But Bristol had provided almost twice as much as the great and rich city of Norwich; 3.5 times as much as the ancient city of York, which it passed in population only in the course of the sixteenth century; very nearly twice the accumulations of Canterbury; and four times the amount vested by the aggressive and extremely generous trading aristocracy of Manchester.⁹

This amazing charitable wealth had been provided, as we have noted, by a relatively small group of 531 donors: men and women deeply devoted to their city, which they endowed with notable and sufficient institutions in a period of almost exactly a century. The average of these benefactions was accordingly extremely high, the amount of £173.6s.9d. per donor being exceeded only by London.¹⁰

The charitable donors of Bristol were above all else concerned with the needs of the poor of their community, doubtless reflecting the uncertainties to which any industrial town in our period was exposed by seasonal and technological unemployment. The great total of £42,306.10s. was provided for one or another form of poor relief, amounting to almost 46 per cent of the total charitable resources of the city, a proportion for this purpose exceeded only in Buckinghamshire. The large sum of £18,932.1s. was designated either in outright doles or in endowments for the direct relief of poor citizens in their own households, while the amazing total of £16,677.13s., more, it may be noted, than the combined totals for Hampshire, Lancashire, and Worcestershire, was vested in the establishment and endowment of almshouses for the succor of unemployable persons. And, finally, the large sum of £6,696.16s. was given for various general charitable uses, all directed to the betterment of the state of the poor in this urban community.

The lively and dominant role of the merchant arist-

⁷ The order is as follows:

	£	s
London	1,889,	211.12.
Bristol	92,042.	6.
Norwich	53,018.	5.
Canterbury	48,605.	2.
York	26,067.	9.
Manchester	23,028.	0.
Taunton	16,046.	11.
Worcester	15,149.	1.

⁸ The average benefaction in the several counties studied is as follows:

	£	s	d
Bristol	173.	6.	9.
Buckinghamshire	51.	3.	10.
Hampshire	44.	10.	2.
Kent	37.	15.	10.
Lancashire	110.	9.	10.
London	255.	12.	2.
Norfolk	65.	10.	10.
Somerset	32.	2.	3.
Worcestershire	66.	17.	10.
Yorkshire	28.	4.	6.

⁷ Little, *Bristol*, 123-134; McGrath, Patrick, *Merchants and merchandise in seventeenth-century Bristol*, xix-xx, Bristol, Bristol Record Society, 1955.

⁸ The totals mentioned are: Buckinghamshire, £88,152.6s.; Hampshire, £87,060.13s.; Lancashire, £103,753.5s.; Somerset, £116,531.16s.; Worcestershire, £52,643.14s.

tocracy in the affairs of Bristol is clearly indicated in the large total which was poured into plans which had as their common purpose the prevention or the cure of poverty. In all £9,592.1s. was given for such experiments in social rehabilitation. This large sum represents 10.42 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the city, being a proportion quite unmatched in any other region studied save for London where 13.32 per cent was provided for such interesting and important uses. The scale of this giving is suggested by the fact that more capital flowed into these forward-looking enterprises in Bristol than in Lancashire, Somerset, and Worcestershire combined. The sense of responsibility and pride which the great merchants took in their rising city is likewise suggested by the relatively large sum of £8,378.5s. given for various municipal betterments, with repair of the streets, improvement of the harbor, and the care of public structures being their principal concern. This outlay, representing more than 9 per cent of the whole, and comparing most interestingly with London where only 4.95 per cent of all gifts were designated for such purposes, meant that in a very small area more wealth was concentrated for major municipal improvements than in the huge area of Lancashire, Somerset, and Worcestershire combined. These donors were quite literally building a city as well as its institutions.

Even more remarkable, since the endowments were concentrated on the needs of a small area and a relatively small population group, were the benefactions made for education in Bristol during our period. In all £19,635.7s., or 21.33 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth, was vested in educational uses, and of this massive total it should be remarked 94.50 per cent was given to the schools of the community. It is doubtful indeed whether any city or area in England had provided by 1640, when these endowments were substantially complete in Bristol, as lavishly supported a structure of education for its children as had this amazing city. If we reckon the number of children who would then have been considered as of school age at something like three thousand, each child would have been vested with an educational endowment of somewhat more than £6, the whole gathered in a very short interval by thoughtful and responsible men who addressed themselves to what they considered the most hopeful and certain means for widening the ambit of opportunity and ensuring the youth of the city against the ignorance which breeds poverty and want.

The aspirations of these merchants who fabricated the institutions of Bristol during our period were almost wholly secular. In all, £12,130.3s. was provided for the religious needs of the community, which amounts to the incredibly low proportion of 13.18 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth given during our long period. This established Bristol as decidedly the most secular of all the areas we have examined, even London having dedicated 19.50 per cent of its philan-

thropic funds to religious uses. Moreover, it is significant to note, almost two-thirds of the scanty total provided for religious purposes had been given prior to the advent of the Reformation. The mood of the dominant commercial aristocracy is well documented by the action of the vestries of fourteen of the seventeen parish churches of the city, which, with the approbation of the Common Council, appropriated church plate to the value of £523.10s.8d. towards the purchase from the Crown of the expropriated monastic properties lying in and about the city and then in clearing the ground thus gained by converting the monastic buildings into quarries for the building and paving needs of the city.

The amazing metamorphosis in the aspirations of the dominant classes of the city may best be shown in a brief review of the structure of its charitable benefactions during the successive periods which constitute our study. As we have observed, Bristol was very prosperous at the close of the Middle Ages and was already ruled by a mercantile aristocracy whose habits of responsibility were well over a century old—indeed, the great Canyng had been dead for only six years when our study begins. This early period of prosperity accordingly explains the great total of £16,832.5s. of charitable benefactions made in the decades prior to the Reformation, amounting to the relatively very high proportion of 18.29 per cent of the whole of such funds given during our entire period. Almost half of this sum was designated for one or another religious use, with chantries and church building constituting the principal interest of these donors. Even so, this proportion is relatively slender for the age, and the secular preoccupation of Bristol's merchants and tradesmen is already apparent in the large sum of £5,865.4s., amounting to more than a third of the whole, which was provided for the needs of the poor of the city. It is significant indeed that in this early period more was given for almshouse endowments (£3,162) than for any other single charitable purpose, save for the £4,429.18s. vested in chantries and other forms of prayers. A large endowment for a grammar school was made in the last decade of this early period, constituting 7.93 per cent of the whole of the charities for the entire interval, while already substantial amounts were being provided for experiments in social rehabilitation and municipal betterments in the decade beginning in 1531. A glance at the table setting out in detail the structure of charitable giving in Bristol will suggest most conclusively that the Middle Ages came to an abrupt end in this precocious community in about 1530.¹¹

There was a decided quickening in the rate of giving for charitable uses during the short interval of the Reformation (1541–1560), nearly half as much having been provided in these two decades as in the preceding

¹¹ *Vide* table 1 (Appendix).

six. A total of £7,951.1s. was given by Bristol's donors during these years, or 8.64 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds to be disposed during our entire period. Further, the remarkable shift in men's aspirations, so clearly under way towards the close of the preceding era, advanced with almost violent acceleration. The proportion of funds designated for religious purposes declined precipitously from nearly half in the period prior to the Reformation to only slightly more than 5 per cent of the whole. Thus the £421.14s. given for religious uses in this interval was actually smaller than the amount provided for the repair of roads and similar public works and was considerably less than that given for experimentation in plans for social rehabilitation. The central preoccupation was with the welfare of the poor, for whose needs about 62 per cent of all gifts were designated, while various municipal betterments attracted about one-fourth of all funds. This is a pattern of all but complete secularization of interests.

But in Bristol, as in all of England, the secular pattern of aspirations became permanently fixed during the Elizabethan age. This was an era of great prosperity in the city, when £27,768.3s. was provided for the many social and cultural needs of a growing community, an amount representing 30.17 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds accumulated during our entire period. The dominant concern was with the advancement of education, into which the great sum of £12,651.7s., amounting to 45.56 per cent of all philanthropies for the period, was poured. Approximately 30 per cent of the whole, in the amount of £8,299.6s., was made available for the endowment of various schemes for the assistance of the poor, while the rehabilitation of the poor attracted nearly 12 per cent of all gifts. The deep interest of these burgher donors in various municipal improvements was continued, funds totaling £3,254.4s., and representing 11.72 per cent of the whole, having been provided for these uses. But this almost prodigal generosity was all but confined to secular causes, for in this long generation gifts over the whole broad spectrum of religious needs practically vanished, the total having fallen to no more than 1.13 per cent of the whole.

The establishment or strengthening of the social and cultural institutions of the city was completed during the early Stuart period (1601-1640), when the impressive total of £33,786.5s., amounting to 36.71 per cent of the whole, was given for the several charitable uses. The needs of religion were almost completely neglected during the first two decades of this interval, but there was a heightened interest in the later years, particularly in the endowment of Puritan lectureships, which raised the proportion for the whole generation to 8.24 per cent of all charitable funds, or slightly more than was provided for municipal betterments. The large total of £19,837.16s., almost the whole being capital, was given for the endowment of the various

forms of poor relief, this representing 58.72 per cent of the charitable total for the period and probably providing something like £1 of capital as a kind of social insurance for every inhabitant of the city. There was likewise a continuous flow of funds to the various educational needs, for which about 15 per cent of the whole was disposed. The considerable sum of £3,872.3s., or 11.46 per cent of the total, was given for carrying forward the schemes of social rehabilitation, with particular interest in stocks for the poor, loan funds, and apprenticeship schemes.

As we have suggested, a perceptible decline in the fortunes of Bristol had set in somewhat before 1640; it was most sharply accentuated by the grave damage wrought to the economy of this economically sophisticated urban complex by the war itself. In relative terms, philanthropic contributions declined more precipitously in Bristol than in any other area we have examined during the revolutionary era (1641-1660). The total of charitable gifts fell to £5,704.12s., or a rate of giving per decade only one-third that prevailing during the preceding period. The needs of the poor absorbed about 60 per cent of the whole of the gifts made during this unhappy interval, while the financing of undertakings to secure the social rehabilitation of the poor commanded the very high proportion of one-fifth of the total. There was a slight increase in the proportion (10.47 per cent) given for religious uses, while the amount provided for educational purposes (£480) was relatively small, possibly, we believe, because the educational institutions of the city were by this date regarded as being reasonably mature. The uncertainty prevailing in a city thrice besieged during these years is most precisely documented by the tiny amount of £88, or 1.54 per cent of the whole, given for municipal improvements in a community which for well over a century had been steadily generous in its support of such good uses.

The historical impact of a charitable benefaction may well depend not only on its size but on the quality and nature of its constitution. Thus outright gifts and doles, so typical of medieval charity, possessed a most limited utility and tended to resolve nothing save the temporary distress of the recipient and to relieve only the qualms of conscience of the donor. But the larger gifts, constituted as endowments and normally carefully ordered as trusts, tended to create institutions which translated in perpetuity the aspirations of the donor into socially effective forms. The capital gifts, therefore, are those which mold an age into the frame of the aspirations of its generous men and hence deserve our particular consideration. In Bristol, the large total of £83,767.10s. of charitable benefactions was in the form of capital gifts. This means that 91 per cent of all contributions made to charity in our period were in endowments, a proportion markedly higher than that prevailing in any of the other regions included in this

study.¹² Hence the charitable benefactions of Bristol possessed a remarkable qualitative value, since they were so heavily dedicated to the creation of effective institutions for the attainment of the ends desired by the burgher aristocracy of the city. All, or nearly all, of the gifts for the erection and maintenance of almshouses, for the creation of loan funds, workhouses, and apprenticeship schemes, and for the support of schools, libraries, and scholarships were in the form of permanent endowments. So prescient and far-sighted were Bristol's donors that a large proportion of the funds given for municipal betterments (97.60 per cent), prisoners (89.43 per cent), and even the maintenance of roads and other public works (92.03 per cent) were given as capital. It is especially noteworthy that, of all the wealth provided during our whole period for the household relief of the poor, only £2,583.10s. was in the form of outright gifts or doles, the great bulk of these resources (86.36 per cent) having been funded in an effort to meet this great responsibility in some permanent way. The merchants and tradesmen of Bristol attacked the whole range of social problems of their age with shrewd intelligence and with very great generosity.

An extensive effort has been made in each county studied to record all charitable benefactions whether they were gifts made during the donor's lifetime or whether they were bequests. We may be reasonably certain that almost all of the testamentary benefactions have been found, but though far more time has been spent in sifting local materials in the search for gifts, we remain uncomfortably aware that a host of casual and unrecorded charitable benefactions made by living donors have escaped us. The larger gifts, those that were in capital form or that were made to institutions of record, have been found, but the small and fugitive gifts, the spontaneous gift of a man to a needy neighbor, must forever elude the historian who is circumscribed by the frailty of the records of our society. Bristol is remarkable in that of all the recorded benefactions the very high proportion of 77.75 per cent of its charitable funds was established by bequest. This proportion, quite unmatched in England,¹³ is accounted for by the fact that the charitable institutions of the city were so largely founded and augmented by the burgher aristocracy which always tended to implement its aspirations by bequests. Such bequests frequently followed preliminary experiments with modest funds during the lifetime of the testator.

We have endeavored to study with special care all benefactions which were established as charitable trusts

¹² The remaining counties vary in this particular within a rather narrow range of 76.83 per cent for Lancashire and 82.60 per cent for London.

¹³ The proportion of charitable funds left by will varies remarkably from county to county, ranging from no more than 27.60 per cent in Buckinghamshire to the 77.75 per cent for Bristol.

and whose subsequent history can be traced.¹⁴ It is disappointing that for Bristol rather fewer of these endowments can be thus studied than one would suppose, since a considerable number were merged with other funds at later dates, with the consequent loss of their identity. We have, however, considerable data regarding forty-two such trusts, establishing not only the essential facts regarding their creation and administration but also their later history. These trusts had an original worth of £1,295 p.a., or an assumed capital value of £25,900. This would suggest that this group of trusts comprised something like 30.92 per cent of all the capital funds provided for charitable purposes during our entire period and about 28.14 per cent of the whole of Bristol's charitable resources, though these endowments were the gift of not more than 7.91 per cent of all donors. This means of course that the average value of £616.13s.4d. for these endowments was relatively very large, though there was a wide range in their worth. Thus while there were nine with a capital value in excess of £600, there were six with an original capital value of £20 or less. The immense and immediate impact of the great Elizabethan law of charitable trusts in stimulating benefactions of this sort is suggested by the fact that twenty-six of these foundations were created after the passage of this momentous statute.

We possess rather fuller information regarding the nature of the trusteeships created by these donors for the administration of their funds. It may be remarked that the Bristol tradition in this respect was markedly different from that of all the agricultural counties studied and, for that matter, from London. In all, eighteen, these including most of the smaller benefactions, were vested in the relatively simple form of rent-charges, the income of which was payable to named persons, such as church wardens, for specific purposes or to the trustees of older charities for the support of their work. Almost as many, sixteen, of the trusts named the city government as trustee, a device favored particularly by the merchants and large benefactors generally, who reposed complete confidence in the prudence and ability of a municipal authority of which they were themselves usually part. Five of these trusts, all substantial in amount, were vested in named private trustees, with a variety of provisions for securing the perpetuation of the trust and the naming of new trustees by the surviving members, while three of the funds were vested in parish officials, in various combinations, a form of trusteeship much favored in rural communities.

These trusts, created a very long time ago and administered in such a variety of ways, have had a remarkable history. During the long course of time that has elapsed, with all the vicissitudes of war, in-

¹⁴ For a full discussion of this matter, *vide* Jordan, W. K., *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1660*, 109-125, London, Unwin, 1959.

flation, and human frailty, only one, a rent-charge of 10s. p.a. created in 1635, has been lost, a record for the survival of capital funds over a period of three centuries which must be quite unmatched. But even more astonishing has been the record of trusteeship achieved in the management of these charitable funds, a considerable number of which, it has been noted, were locked in the economically hazardous form of fixed rent-charges. The original capital of approximately £25,900 was invested and re-invested, principally in Bristol real property, and had grown at latest available reporting dates to a total worth of £289,389, again assuming an interest rate of 5 per cent for the conversion of income amounts to capital values.¹⁵ This means that these funds have increased in worth 11.2 times over in the years since their creation, very probably having kept pace with the steadily inflationary process of the past three centuries, while the income has been wholly dedicated to securing the aspirations of men and women who loved Bristol and who helped to build its future as they had its present.

Bristol was a progressive and unusual community in still another sense. A somewhat larger proportion of its women inhabitants participated in the forming of its social and cultural institutions than in any of the other regions we have examined, London included. In all, there were eighty-two women benefactors to Bristol charities, or 15.44 per cent of the total of all donors for the city. It is evident that the number of women participating directly in the charitable affairs of the community was rising from decade to decade towards the close of our period, with a remarkably high proportion of 32 per cent of all donors during the troubled decade of the Civil War, when there seems to have been a tendency throughout England for wives to assume an ever larger share in the direction of economic affairs while their husbands were absent at war or, more often, in prudent retirement.¹⁶ The women benefactors of Bristol gave in all £6,976.4s. to its charities, or a rather high average of £85.1s.6d. for each donor. The contributions of the group constituted 7.58 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the city, a proportion, it must be observed, rather

¹⁵ It must be noted that this estimate of later values is based on data not always so recent as might be desired. In a few cases, indeed, the last available reporting date is 1819, in somewhat more the date is 1870, while in most the date is 1910 or later.

¹⁶ The proportion of women donors by decades for the later years follows:

	%
1571-1580	10.00
1581-1590	9.62
1591-1600	12.50
1601-1610	30.77
1611-1620	24.32
1621-1630	14.29
1631-1640	16.98
1641-1650	32.00
1651-1660	13.63

slighter than that given by women in London and certain other counties.¹⁷

The pattern of charitable interest displayed by this considerable group of women donors differed markedly from that of the community as a whole. Nearly 58 per cent of all their gifts were for one or another form of poor relief, as compared with about 46 per cent for all donors of the community. Thus they contributed the substantial sum of £2,113.13s. for the endowment of various forms of household relief, as well as £929.18s. for the establishment of almshouses. Their interest in experiments in social rehabilitation (8.18 per cent) was only slightly less than that of the community at large, with a particular concern for apprenticeship funds, while their support of the various schemes for municipal improvement, which so absorbed their spouses, was all but non-existent. They lent approximately as much support to education (19.35 per cent) as did donors in general, and their contribution to religious needs was, somewhat surprisingly, only slightly higher than that of the community as a whole.

We have found it extremely difficult to determine precisely the social group to which women donors belonged. On occasion, even with women who were really considerable benefactors, it is quite impossible to pierce the anonymity with which the title of "widow" or "spinster" veils the status of women of the period. In Bristol, however, it has been possible to identify fifty-eight of these women donors, or somewhat more than 70 per cent of the entire group, and to say with some certainty that all but two of those not identified belong either to the ranks of the tradesmen or the artisans. A quite surprising total of fourteen were members of the rural aristocracy of Gloucestershire and Somerset, though five of these women were resident in Bristol at the time of their death. One member of the nobility, Lady Berkeley, gave £30 to the poor in 1559, while seven who were of the upper gentry made almost the whole of their benefactions for religious uses in the earlier decades of our period. There were six women donors, drawn from the ranks of the lower gentry, whose interests were almost evenly divided between the needs of the poor of the city and the several religious uses. In total, though, the contributions of this rural group, all with ties in Bristol, amounted to no more than £664.9s., or about

¹⁷ The relative importance of women donors in the affairs of Bristol may be compared with that in the other counties:

	% of all donors	% of all charities
Bristol	15.44	7.58
Buckinghamshire	13.50	13.01
Hampshire	12.20	3.90
Kent	12.56	5.49
Lancashire	11.28	6.34
London	14.88	9.14
Norfolk	12.97	9.47
Somerset	14.63	6.03
Worcestershire	12.71	5.31
Yorkshire	12.99	12.55

9.5 per cent of the whole amount given by women to the charitable uses of the city.

The clearly dominant group amongst these donors were the twenty-four wives and widows of Bristol merchants, or in two cases daughters of Bristol merchants who had married London merchants, who gave the generous total of £5,054.7s. for various charitable uses, or about 72 per cent of the whole amount donated by women. Certain of these gifts, as we shall note in our discussion of individual benefactions, were not only large but were also excellently vested and thoughtfully dedicated to the pressing needs of the community. There were as well twelve women of the tradesmen class who gave a total of £816.4s. for charitable uses, the high average for this group being the consequence of one particularly munificent benefaction. The remaining sum of about £441 provided by women donors was given by six known to be of the artisan class, two widows of professional men, and the twenty-four whose status cannot be exactly ascertained. But from whatever class they were drawn, the women benefactors of Bristol displayed quite as much imagination, boldness of conception, and secular zeal as did this remarkable community as a whole.

C. THE STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

As we have so persistently suggested, the institutional and social life of Bristol was to a remarkable degree dominated by the burgher aristocracy of the city. Yet it remains true that all classes of men and women in the community made some measure of contribution to the development of this rich and interesting urban complex which was so visibly preparing itself for the requirements of modernity. We shall now examine in some detail the structure and nature of the aspirations exhibited by the several classes of the community.

It was a relatively small group of identified individual donors that made contribution to the charitable needs of Bristol in the course of our period. As we have said, there were 531 such benefactors, who provided in total £92,042.6s. for the various charitable uses, or an average of £173.6s.9d. for each donor.¹⁸ We have been able to establish the class identification of 469 of these persons, or the relatively high proportion of 88.32 per cent of the whole number. All the remaining 62 men and women were resident in Bristol at the time of their gifts or bequests, and we may say with some certainty, the nature and size of their benefactions being taken into account, that there were amongst them a considerable number of artisans and at least a sprinkling of tradesmen. Since we know that all the donors whose social status has not been precisely ascertained were urban dwellers, there remain forty-three benefactors to the needs of the city who were members of the rural classes, for the most part persons dwelling in nearby Somerset or Gloucester-

shire who possessed intimate personal links with the city. These donors, drawn principally from the gentry and yeomanry of the cultural hinterland of Bristol, comprised 8.10 per cent of all donors. But the total of their charitable benefactions was relatively small, amounting to no more than 3.10 per cent of the whole, an amount closely comparable to that given by the unidentified donors of the city.¹⁹

An analysis of the structure of class contributions to the charitable funds of Bristol demonstrates, most significantly, that there the merchant aristocracy undertook a greater share of civic responsibility than did this class in any other city of the realm. Numerically a very small group in Bristol as in all other cities of our period, members of this social group nonetheless constituted almost one-third of the total number of donors, while they gave the incredibly large proportion of three-quarters (74.95 per cent) of the total of its charitable funds.²⁰ Even in London the role of the class is by no means so completely dominant, for there, while members of the merchant class numbered somewhat more than a third (36.22 per cent) of all benefactors, their contributions, though staggering in amount, accounted for only 56.53 per cent of the total for the city.

The almost prodigal generosity of Bristol's mercantile aristocracy in assuming responsibility for its institutions is a consequence of traditions of dedication to community needs which reach far back into the first golden age of this class as exemplified in the massive good works of the Canyngs. It is also evident, as one assembles even brief biographical details for these men and reads their wills and inventories, that they were aggressive speculators from the very begin-

¹⁸ An analysis of the social structure of charitable benefactions in Bristol:

No. of donors in the class	Social status	% of all county gifts	% of all county persons	Total for the class
				£ s
1	Crown	0.87	0.19	800. 0.
4	Nobility	0.67	0.75	613. 6.
11	Upper gentry	1.26	2.07	1,163. 7.
20	Lower gentry	1.08	3.77	992. 8.
8	Yeomen	0.09	1.51	82.12.
5	Upper clergy	1.03	0.94	950. 0.
15	Lower clergy	8.69	2.82	7,999.13.
164	Merchants	74.95	30.89	68,987.13.
110	Tradesmen	3.51	20.72	3,233. 8.
66	Burgurers	3.40	12.43	3,131. 7.
57	Artisans	0.37	10.73	340.12.
8	Professional	1.11	1.51	1,017.15.
62	Unidentified	2.97	11.68	2,730. 5.
Total 531				£92,042. 6s.

¹⁹ It has been suggested that the merchant community of Bristol at no time during our period numbered more than 150, and frequently considerably fewer (McGrath, *Merchants and merchandise*, ix).

ning of our period down until about 1630; they were men whose capital was fluid, who were accustomed to making decisions involving great risks, and who were quite prepared to dedicate a considerable portion of their estates to the fulfilment of the aspirations which they held for their beloved city. And then there was so evidently the example before them of the famous, the immortal, benefactions of the Canyngs, the Thornes, and the Whites. The tradition of civic generosity established by these great men bore with an immense weight on all members of the class, however modest their fortunes might be. No man could quite escape, or perhaps wished to escape, the responsibilities which had become affixed to status. The unique greatness of Bristol from the fourteenth century to our own may be said to consist of this fact.

Yet the evidence relating to the wealth of donors of this class suggests that, by London standards at least, few of these men were really immensely rich. We have reasonably complete data regarding the worth of the estates of forty-seven members of the merchant class in Bristol, or 28.66 per cent of the whole number of donors who were of the class. The total value of the estates of these men, with no effort made to estimate the worth of their landed property save in the relatively few instances where particulars are available, was £90,287.16s., charitable bequests being included. This suggests an average disposable wealth of £1,921 for members of the class, or an amount considerably greater than that which we have found for the lower gentry in most of the counties we have examined. There were, of course, great extremes in merchant wealth, for most of the men were speculators who had doubtless won and lost several fortunes during the course of their career. While the median estate was worth the substantial total of £965.13s., the range for the whole group lay between the broad extremes of £68 left by an honored but evidently impecunious merchant who died in 1539,²¹ to a great fortune of £16,935.

It is interesting to observe that these Bristol merchants constituted a social and economic microcosm very similar indeed to that observed in London. The estate values which we have cited, as suggested, relate in most cases only to the liquid wealth of these men, since an accurate estimate of the worth of their real property holdings is not possible. And with these men, as with their London colleagues of the period, one observes a tendency to diversify their property by prudent investments in urban real property or in agricultural land. In only three instances is it certain that these merchants held no real property, while in another ten cases the facts are uncertain. Eight of this group, or about a sixth of the whole number, owned ships or, more commonly, shares in ships. Eighteen of them held investments in urban real prop-

²¹ It should be noted that he possessed as well a third interest in a ship, some stock, and a house in Ireland, the value of which we cannot estimate.

erty, almost wholly in Bristol, while seventeen owned farming land, principally in nearby counties, ranging from small tracts to extensive holdings that were evidently held as investments. Eight of the group were large proprietors owning from one to three manors, all in either Gloucestershire or Somerset, in addition to their mercantile fortunes. At the same time, it must be remarked, in only one case had the merchant made the translation, so common in London, from the aristocracy of trade to the aristocracy of land. These men clearly held land as an investment and as a hedge against the colossal risks of their calling, but the center of gravity of their wealth and of their interests remained in Bristol and in trade.

At least a very rough index of the economic fortunes of Bristol during our period may perhaps be constructed from the average worth of these forty-seven merchants in various periods of time. During the years 1480-1560, there were eleven merchants in the group who on the average left estates valued at £1,951. In the next interval, 1561-1600, the average worth of mercantile fortunes declined sharply to £1,024, only to rise precipitously indeed during the early Stuart period to the very high average figure of £3,644. The severe effect of the Civil War on Bristol's commercial prosperity is mirrored in the fact that during this interval (1641-1660) the average worth of the relatively small group of seven merchants dying in this period declined to £2,779.

But the most important attribute of the mercantile aristocracy of Bristol, particularly during the long interval 1480 to 1630, was its unbelievable generosity. These merchants undertook heavy burdens of social responsibility almost automatically as an aspect of status, either by benefactions during their lifetimes or more commonly by carefully arranged bequests. Thus, the forty-seven donors from this class whose estates can be valued with reasonable accuracy gave as a group rather more than a third (35 per cent) of all the charitable benefactions made by their class during our period and hence may be regarded as constituting a large and reasonably reliable sample. These men, with estates possessing a total worth of £90,287.16s., gave in all £24,380.13s., or about 27 per cent of their total liquid worth, for the various charitable and institutional requirements of their city. This not only suggests a truly immense generosity but helps as well to explain the tremendous power which the burgher aristocracy of England was to acquire and wield during the period of our study. These men knew what they wanted, and they possessed the wealth and the disposition to secure for their own and future ages the institutions required to bring a new world and a new society into being.

We have similar data regarding eighteen tradesmen of our period, who as a group left estates with a total worth, charities included, of £2,672.3s. The average worth of their estates seems very low, being no more

than £148.9s.1d., while the range was from £11 to £573.17s. Nor were the tradesmen of Bristol particularly generous in their charitable dispositions, since this group left only £137.15s. for various charitable causes, or no more than 5.16 per cent of the whole value of their estates.

We may now examine in some detail the impact of the various social classes on the charitable institutions of Bristol and analyze the differences in the aspirations of the various classes of men making their contributions to the extraordinarily swift development of this community during our era.

It should be noted at the outset that there was only one truly charitable gift from the Crown, totaling £800, of which half was for poor relief and the remainder for municipal purposes, a contribution accounting for 0.87 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the city. There were as well four benefactions by the nobility, all being from members of the great Gloucestershire family of Berkeley, which had been very generous to the city during the Middle Ages. These benefactions, ranging in time from 1492 to 1559, totaled £613.6s., or no more than 0.67 per cent of the charitable resources accumulated by the community during the course of our period. These gifts were almost exclusively (95.11 per cent) for religious purposes, which is perhaps all the more understandable considering the belligerent secularism of the dominant classes within the city itself.

As we have previously suggested, there were likewise a considerable number of charitable gifts and bequests to Bristol from members of the gentry seated in the surrounding countryside of Gloucestershire and Somerset. We have recorded eleven such gifts from the upper gentry, accounting for 2.07 per cent of all donors, while the sum contributed by members of this class amounted to £1,163.7s., or no more than 1.26 per cent of the whole of Bristol's charitable funds. These donors, too, were most concerned with the religious needs of the city, almost half (47.65 per cent) of their benefactions having been made for these purposes. The needs of the poor commanded a third (33.44 per cent) of all their gifts, while a substantial benefaction of £200 made in 1626 for the augmentation of a school endowment accounts for about 18 per cent of the total given by the class.

There were as well contributions made by twenty members of the lower gentry from the rural hinterland of Bristol, these donors numbering 3.77 per cent of the whole. The total given by members of the class was £992.8s., or no more than 1.08 per cent of all the charities of the city. The chief concern of the lower gentry was with the poor, to whom somewhat more than half (52.34 per cent) of all their gifts were made, with most of the remainder (43.63 per cent) having been contributed to the neglected religious needs of the community. It is most interesting to observe that of the total of £2,155.15s. given for charitable purposes in

Bristol by the upper gentry and lower gentry combined, a full 45 per cent was for religious uses, a proportion standing in the most dramatic and significant contrast to the scant 13.18 per cent given for such uses when the whole structure of Bristol's benefactions is taken into account. Here is to be found most compelling evidence of the velocity of urban aspirations when measured against the slower and more cautious shift in interest which we have observed in the rural society in county after county.²²

Contributions to the charitable needs of Bristol were made by five members of the upper clergy, or less than 1 per cent of all donors, who gave a total of £950, or only 1.03 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the city. About three-fourths (73.68 per cent) of this relatively minor sum was designated for religious uses, with by far the largest single interest being church building, to which £650 was contributed. All the remainder, in the amount of £250, was given in 1628 by Archbishop Matthew, a native of Bristol, towards founding the public library in the city. There were as well fifteen members of the lower clergy, or 2.82 per cent of the whole number of donors, who made benefactions to the needs of the community. This group gave a total of £7,999.13s. to the charitable uses of Bristol, or 8.69 per cent of the whole, though it must at once be noted that almost all of this sum is accounted for by the gift of one clergyman of a merchant family, Thomas White, of London, who in 1624 left the huge sum of £7,880 to Bristol, principally for almshouse endowment and for municipal uses.

As we have so frequently observed, the relatively small merchant aristocracy of Bristol was almost completely dominant in shaping and strengthening the social and cultural institutions of the city. Though we have no way of making an exact count of the total number of men in the class, a high proportion must have been benefactors, since we have recorded contributions from 164 of them during the course of our period, this group constituting the amazingly high proportion of 30.89 per cent of all charitable donors. These benefactors gave in all the immense sum of £68,987.13s. to the institutions of their community, or almost exactly 75 per cent of the whole of the city's relatively rich charitable resources. It is not too much to say that this single social group by its own efforts, imagination, and great generosity was to establish and endow every significant modern institution and social organism of the community. Their principal concern was with the problem of poverty, for they gave about 42 per cent of the total of their benefactions to the needs of the poor, including such large sums as £12,914.14s. for household relief and £9,512.9s. for the endowment of almshouses. They exhibited as well an enlightened and persistent interest in numerous experiments in

²² Gifts of the yeomanry to Bristol's charities, totaling only £82.12s., or 0.09 per cent of the whole, are too small to possess statistical significance.

the social rehabilitation of the poor and in undertakings seeking to attack the sources of poverty. Of the great sum given by these men 11.80 per cent was for these purposes, as compared with 10.42 per cent for the city at large; 8.27 per cent of their benefactions were designated for various municipal uses, a slightly smaller proportion than that (9.10 per cent) for the city as a whole. In all, merchant donors gave the large proportion of 27.15 per cent of their benefactions towards the building and strengthening of the educational resources of their community, a substantially larger fraction than that (21.33 per cent) provided by the city at large. These gifts were almost wholly concentrated on the building and endowment of schools, into which they poured the very large total of £18,216, or 26.4 per cent of the whole of their benefactions. In fact, men of this social group built these great educational resources all but single-handed, for they gave somewhat more than 98 per cent of the whole amount vested in the schools of the city. The concern of the merchant donors with religious needs, taking our whole period in view, was most limited, the total of their contributions to the several religious uses being no more than 10.92 per cent of their charitable gifts, as compared with 13.18 per cent for the community as a whole. Some measure of the aggressive secularism of the class is suggested when we note that merchants provided less for religious purposes than for experiments in social rehabilitation and not much more than they gave for municipal betterments.

Even in the earliest of our periods, during the decades before the Reformation, the social leadership of the merchant aristocracy was mature, generous, and principally secular in its aspirations. In these two generations Bristol merchants gave in all the large sum of £13,619.9s. to various charitable causes, this being 19.74 per cent of the whole contribution to be made by the class. Upwards of 40 per cent of their total benefactions in these years were for poor relief, practically the whole amount being in the enduring form of capital endowments. The maturity of the interests of the group is suggested by the fact that eleven merchant donors of the period gave in all £2,994.19s. for almshouse endowments, a full generation before this enlightened kind of care for the indigent was being undertaken in most parts of England. The relatively small proportion of 37.76 per cent of the gifts of these early merchants was designated for religious uses, with a particularly heavy outlay of £3,434.16s. for prayers. Small though the benefactions of the burgher aristocracy to religious needs were even in this pre-Reformation period, the temper and quality of the secularism of the group is suggested by the fact that the amount so provided is more than twice that given for such purposes during the remainder of our long period. During these early decades, considerable charitable outlays, comprising 5.57 per cent of all benefactions, were made for experiments in social re-

habilitation, and a somewhat larger proportion (6.15 per cent) was designated for various municipal betterments. And finally, the substantial total of £1,335, representing 9.8 per cent of all gifts, was provided for the endowment of grammar schools within the city.

In the period 1541-1560, which we have somewhat arbitrarily regarded as the Reformation interval, the scale of giving for charitable uses by the mercantile aristocracy was rapidly increasing. In this short time, the large total of £5,815.11s. was provided for the several charitable causes, this amounting to 8.43 per cent of the whole of the benefactions of the merchant class during our entire period. There was during these years an intensive concern with the problem of poverty in the city, 61.16 per cent of all charitable sums given by the merchants having been designated for its relief. There was likewise an increasing interest in schemes for social rehabilitation, in which was vested 9.37 per cent of the total given by the class. The merchants also exhibited a most lively interest in municipal needs, nearly a quarter of all benefactions having been given to one or another scheme of betterment, while only nominal amounts were added to the educational resources of the community during these tumultuous years. But by far the most significant trend during this period, more pronounced in Bristol than in any other community we have studied, was the quite literal withering of burgher interest in the religious needs of the seventeen parishes of the city. The whole of the benefactions provided for religious uses amounted to the trifling proportion of 2.76 per cent of the charitable contributions of this rich, aggressive, and culturally dominant class. Cultural revolution has arrived indeed when in so brief a period such a metamorphosis can occur in the aspirations of the most important class of men in the social organism.

It is not too much to say that the Elizabethan era was the golden age of the merchant community of Bristol. This was the period in which the principal social and cultural institutions of the city were either established or greatly strengthened. This record of immense civic accomplishment was almost exclusively the contribution of this small but dedicated group of men. The merchants of Bristol gave during this generation the prodigious total of £25,576 to the charitable funds of their city, or 37.07 per cent of the sum provided by the class during the whole of our period. The scale of their giving and the decisive impact which the aspirations of the class had upon the life and institutions of what was now either the second or the third city of the realm is suggested by the fact that the merchant aristocracy alone accounted for slightly more than 92 per cent of all charitable benefactions made by all classes of men during this most prosperous age. Here we find a complete cultural dominance; and it was a dominance of men with an almost rigidly secular spectrum of aspirations for their age and society. Rather more than a quarter (25.91 per cent) of merchant benefactions were vested for poor relief in this

interval, with endowments of £3,373.7s. for household relief and £3,095 for the support of almshouses. More than 12 per cent of these gifts were designated for ambitious and most interesting experiments in social rehabilitation, and approximately the same proportion (12.15 per cent) was deployed for a variety of plans for municipal betterment. But the central preoccupation of this period was with the extension of educational opportunities, into which the merchant aristocracy poured nearly half of the great total of their benefactions, including, it must be noted, the impressive sum of £12,387 for the founding and endowment of schools. Yet this truly prodigal generosity proffered almost nothing for the now pressing religious needs of the community, to which no more than 1.10 per cent of all gifts were directed. And there is grim irony in the fact that of this trifling total by far the largest single sum was one providing for the partial endowment of a Puritan lectureship. The triumph of secularism was as complete as it was pervasive in Bristol.

We have noted that a decline in the prosperity of Bristol, and this means the fortunes of the commercial aristocracy, set in at the very close of our next interval. Nonetheless, the merchant class during the early Stuart period gave the large total of £20,650.13s. for various charitable undertakings, this constituting 29.93 per cent of the whole of the benefactions of the group. Considerably more than half (54.51 per cent) of this sum was settled for the creation of new endowments for poor relief or the augmentation of old and successful relief ventures. Heavy outlays were made, comprising 16.01 per cent of the whole, in schemes for social rehabilitation, particular interest being shown in stocks for the poor, apprenticeship plans, and the establishment of loan funds. Somewhat more than a fifth of all the benefactions of the class were given for the further strengthening of the educational resources of the community. At the same time, there was at least a modest revival of concern for religious needs, after all but complete neglect for two full generations, since 7.15 per cent of benefactions were dedicated to a wide variety of religious uses, with, however, the greatest interest being manifested in the endowment of lectureships and the general needs of the numerous parish churches of the city.

During the period of revolutionary disturbances there was, as we have previously indicated, a decline in the charitable giving of the merchant class so steep as to suggest economic catastrophe. The causes were very evidently complex, but the principal ones were certainly the general decline of the prosperity of the city which had begun somewhat before 1640, the destructive impact of warfare and siege on the fortunes of a trading class, and, perhaps most importantly, a marked deterioration in the quality of commercial leadership and in the magnificent tradition of civic responsibility maintained for so long by the mercantile elite. During these two decades members of the mer-

chant fraternity gave £3,326 to charitable uses, representing no more than 4.82 per cent of the whole of the benefactions of the class during our entire period. Not only is this total itself relatively small, but, save for one school endowment, made by a Royalist former mayor, and one apprenticeship endowment, all the benefactions were as pedestrian as they were prudent. The boldness and the imaginative character of the class after a long and glorious period had all too evidently been greatly weakened. During this interval, about 57 per cent of all benefactions were designated for poor relief, while 12.75 per cent were given for the implementation of schemes of social rehabilitation. As one would expect during a politically unsettled era, only a thin proportion (1.56 per cent) of all gifts was made for municipal improvements, while the educational institutions of the city, which to men of the age appeared completely endowed, attracted 14.43 per cent of the total. There was a further, though slight, increase in the proportion of gifts designated for religious uses, which amounted to 14.29 per cent of the whole.

The prodigious contribution and the aggressive leadership of Bristol's merchants in establishing the institutions and the social traditions of the city were so dominant as to dwarf the role of all other social groups. Thus, the tradesmen—the small proprietors and the shopkeepers—gave in all the not inconsiderable sum of £3,233.8s. to the charitable needs of their city, but it was an amount completely blanketed by the immense generosity of the merchant aristocracy. The benefactions of only 110 men certainly identified as tradesmen have been noted, it being probable however, that a substantial number of them are included in the somewhat amorphous class we have described as "burghers" as well as amongst the wholly unidentified donors. The contributions of this class amounted to only 3.51 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the city, though these men numbered somewhat more than one-fifth (20.72 per cent) of all donors. The relative modesty of their estates and role in the affairs of the city is suggested by the fact that their average charitable contribution was £29.7s.11d., as compared with the £420.13s.1d. disposed to charity by the average Bristol merchant.

It is likewise interesting to observe that the social and cultural aspirations of these lesser and somewhat timorous men differed most markedly from those of the formidable and bold mercantile class of the city. The tradesmen were above all else concerned with the problem of poverty, to which they contributed the amazingly high proportion of three-quarters (74.86 per cent) of all their benefactions, with a particular interest in household relief, to which they gave well over half (55.55 per cent) of their charities. They supported with about a tenth of their funds the aggressive social experimentation being carried on by their merchant colleagues, but seemed wholly uninterested in the perhaps too costly undertakings for municipal im-

provements, to which they gave only slightly more than 2 per cent of their total benefactions. It is more surprising that the educational facilities of the community, being built and endowed with almost fierce vigor by the merchants, attracted only nominal interest from the tradesmen. They lent support to the religious needs of the community with no more than 11.18 per cent of their contribution, a proportion strikingly similar to that of the great merchants of the city. Differing from the merchants so remarkably in the general pattern of their interests, the tradesmen joined with the dominant class of the city in the intensity of their secularism.

We have employed the not very precise term "burghers" to describe those donors who had held civic office or dignity or who were clearly enfranchised, but whose status is not otherwise clearly defined. There were sixty-six of these men, or their widows, in Bristol, most of whom were probably tradesmen and some of whom were undoubtedly small merchants. This group left charities totaling £3,131.7s., only slightly less than the sum provided by the tradesmen, and constituting 3.40 per cent of the whole of the philanthropic funds of the city. The relatively substantial economic status of the group is suggested by the fact that their average charitable benefaction was £47.8s.11d., as compared with £29.7s.11d. for the tradesmen. These burgher donors did not exhibit the same preoccupation with the needs of the poor as did the tradesmen, rather less than 48 per cent of all their benefactions having been designated for this purpose. At the same time, they were as a group much more interested in the forward-looking schemes of social rehabilitation, to which they gave the large proportion of 26.98 per cent of all their charities, suggesting that some merchants are almost certainly included in this quite amorphous category. Their concern with municipal improvements was modest indeed, only 4.77 per cent of all their benefactions having been made for these uses. They, like the tradesmen, many of whom were certainly numbered in the class, were quite inexplicably uninterested in the educational needs of the community, to which only a tiny proportion (0.32 per cent) of all their gifts were made. It is clear that the merchant aristocracy of the city had shouldered almost the whole of the responsibility for the building of the great educational resources with which Bristol was provided during the course of our period. At the same time, the burghers remained relatively more interested in the religious needs of the numerous parishes of the city than did most urban groups, almost exactly a fifth (20.05 per cent) of all their gifts having been designated for these uses as compared with 10.92 per cent for all merchant donors and 13.18 per cent for the city at large.

We have recorded charitable benefactions for only fifty-seven donors who were certainly of the artisan class, though it seems likely that a number of un-

identified donors were in point of fact of this social group. Of those about whom we may be certain, twenty were connected with cloth manufacturing, while food-processing and serving account for eight, as do the various metal trades. There were seven who were engaged in shipping, six were in the leather trades, four were in the building industry, and the remaining four found their living in other miscellaneous industries. While these donors account for 10.73 per cent of the total number, the benefactions of the class totaled only £340.12s., or no more than 0.37 per cent of the charities of the city. It is all too clear that the artisans of Bristol did not possess the stalwart tradition of participation in the affairs of the city to be found among their *confrères* of Norwich in this period. The artisans were of course especially interested in the plight of the poor, to whom they gave 55.70 per cent of all their charitable donations; and, somewhat surprisingly, they remained in successive periods the most intractably pious of the several social classes in the city, having over the whole span of our study given 41.32 per cent of their contributions to the various religious uses. Their support of the plans for social rehabilitation was slight (0.04 per cent) and their contribution to schemes of municipal improvement was also no more than nominal (2.93 per cent). In no urban community of England was there really impressive interest in education on the part of this class, for the education of whose children schools were being endowed in every part of the realm, but the disinterest of Bristol's artisans in this great movement must be quite unmatched, since the benefactions of the class for this purpose amounted to precisely nothing.

There was likewise a small group of benefactors to Bristol's charities drawn from the several professions. This group of eight, of whom two were Bristol-born Londoners, includes three lawyers, three physicians, a scrivener, and a professional singer. The total of the charitable contributions of these men was £1,017.15s., or a quite substantial average of £127.4s.4d. These donors were deeply interested in remedying the plight of the poor, 60.69 per cent of all their gifts having been made for this purpose. Their concern was especially concentrated on the endowment of almshouses in the city, well over half (59.54 per cent) of all their benefactions having been given for this single charitable use. There was at least a modest interest (5.40 per cent) in experiments in social rehabilitation, but quite inexplicable is the slight concern with education, to which no more than 7.86 per cent of all the benefactions of these men were dedicated. Their interest in religious needs was non-existent, save for one substantial London gift for the endowment of a living, which, however, had the effect of lifting the total disposed for religious purposes to nearly one-fourth (24.56 per cent) of the whole of the benefactions of the class.

There remain sixty-two donors whose social status

cannot be precisely ascertained, though it seems quite clear that a considerable number in this group were artisans. These unidentified donors number 11.68 per cent of all Bristol's benefactors, while the sum of their contributions, £2,730.5s., amounts to no more than 2.97 per cent of the whole. The pattern of interests displayed by the group, reflecting as it does the relatively modest social status of most of its members, differs rather markedly from that of the city as a whole, which was of course heavily weighted by the almost overwhelming contribution of the merchant class. Substantially more than half (58.42 per cent) of all the benefactions of the unidentified donors were directed towards the relief of poverty, as compared with 45.96 per cent for the city at large. The proportion given for experiments in social rehabilitation (4.08 per cent) and for education (7.91 per cent) were much more modest than those for the generality of donors, while, quite strangely, that provided for municipal improvements (17.27 per cent) was substantially greater. The proportion given for religious uses (12.35 per cent) by these unidentified donors was very similar to that of the city as a whole.

D. THE IMPACT OF LONDON ON THE CITY

Great and proud as was the city of Bristol, aggressive and self-sufficient as its mercantile aristocracy may have been, even this capital city of the west was by no means untouched by the immense and all-pervasive generosity of London. Bristol lay a full one hundred twenty miles to the west of London; it at once served and dominated a considerable region even more remote from London; and its commerce and activities faced outwards to the west and across the sea. Moreover, even during the early decades of our period there is clear evidence that the city possessed large and rapidly expanding capital resources, which made it very nearly independent of the great capital pool concentrated in London and which enhanced the economic and cultural self-sufficiency of this remarkable city. Yet while very few of its apprentices were drawn from London and Middlesex, not a few were drawn from Bristol to participate in the ever-broadening opportunities in trade and commerce afforded by London; while, at a higher level of commercial contact, several of the great Bristol merchants divided their time between the two cities or maintained family correspondents in London. These connections were to provide for Bristol a rich, though by no means decisive, resource in the building of its charitable institutions.

During the course of our period a small group of nineteen London donors, of whom fifteen were natives of Bristol, gave to Bristol the very large total of £18,160 of charitable endowments.²³ This means, of course,

that the average of these benefactions was large, the figure of £955.15s.9d. being rather more than twice as great as the average benefaction of £420.13s.1d. provided by the Bristol merchants as a whole. The scale and significance of these London bequests is suggested by the fact that though this small group of donors comprised not more than 3.58 per cent of all Bristol's benefactors, they accounted for the considerable proportion of 19.73 per cent of the charitable resources accumulated by the city during the course of our period. The significance of these great gifts is emphasized when we reflect that they were in total nearly as great as the sum provided for Bristol's charitable institutions by all other social groups save the merchants and tradesmen. Nonetheless, so immense was the charitable contribution and the social responsibility of Bristol's own merchant aristocracy that the impressive proportion of its funds gained from London generosity was to be of decisive weight in none of its institutions.²⁴

The London benefactors were drawn from several social classes. There was one donor from the upper gentry, who gave £240 for educational uses, one lawyer, who left a modest bequest of £5 to the poor of his native city, and one physician, who bequeathed £927 which was to be employed principally for the relief of the poor and for religious uses. By far the largest single bequest was the huge total of £7,880 left in 1624 by Thomas White,²⁵ which, as we have noted, was a sum so great as to render meaningless any statistical discussion of the structure of the aspirations of the lower clergy. Four of the benefactors were London tradesmen, who as a group left the modest total of £172 to Bristol charities, of which £147 was for poor relief. All the remaining London benefactors were merchants, four of whom left great bequests of £1,000 or more to the western city. The charitable contributions of this small group totaled £8,936, or 12.9 per cent of the enormous sum left by all merchants, whether of Bristol or of London, for the needs of the city. Great and helpful as these London benefactions were, therefore, they constituted but a small proportion of the wealth vested by the Bristol merchants in the social institutions of that city.

It is particularly interesting to note that the pattern of London benefactions to Bristol differed markedly

42, 43), who, while born in Bristol, certainly claimed London as his normal place of residence. Thorne belonged to one of the leading merchant families of Bristol, and his bequests make it clear that his principal concern was with the needs of his native city.

²⁴ The proportion of charitable funds supplied by London is as follows for the remaining counties: Buckinghamshire, 17.04 per cent; Hampshire, 29.23 per cent; Kent, 40.74 per cent; Lancashire, 28.03 per cent; Norfolk, 13.21 per cent; Somerset, 26.05 per cent; Worcestershire, 23.01 per cent; Yorkshire, 12.09 per cent.

²⁵ *Vide post*, 29-30.

²³ After some indecision, we have counted as of Bristol the great merchant, Robert Thorne (*vide post*, 22, 27, 33, 35, 37,

from that of Bristol donors as a whole.²⁶ Secular though the temper of Bristol was, the London benefactors, including one great clerical donor, were even more rigorously concerned with the material needs and well-being of mankind, having devoted no more than 5.88 per cent of all their gifts and bequests to religious causes. Almost 58 per cent of their benefactions were in the form of endowments for poor relief, with a heavy emphasis on almshouse foundations, as compared with 45.96 per cent of the whole of Bristol's charities devoted to this purpose. So too, London donors were much more substantially concerned (17.18 per cent) with various schemes for municipal betterment than were the generality of Bristol's donors, while their interest in the lively experiments being carried on in the social rehabilitation of the poor was slightly greater than that of Bristol donors as a whole. At the same time, their total contribution of £1,320 to the educational resources of the community, amounting to 7.27 per cent of the whole of London benefactions, was slight indeed when compared with the great total of £19,635.7s. contributed principally by Bristol merchants for this laudable and forward-looking purpose.

E. THE IMPACT OF THE CITY ON THE NATION

Great, rich, and generous as was Bristol, it was but a small provincial town as compared with the London of our period. We have seen that the power and influence of London spread into every nook and cranny of the realm as the London merchants and tradesmen translated into reality the aspirations which they held for their age, first in their own city and then throughout the land.²⁷ The merchants of Bristol did quite as much relatively for their own city, but they possessed neither the wealth nor the strength of evangelical conviction which were to make the London merchant aristocracy so decisively powerful in creating, for all of England, the institutions of a new age. We have seen that their power reached even into the commercial citadel of Bristol, to which they supplied very nearly 20 per cent of all the endowed charitable wealth of that community.

But this breadth of view and this evangelical strength is not to be observed amongst Bristol donors, who remained generously but provincially preoccupied with the needs and the fortunes of their own city. In fact,

²⁶ Bristol and London benefactions to Bristol:

	Poor	Social rehabilita- tion	Municipal better- ments	Educa- tion	Religion	Total
	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
Bristol gifts to Bristol	42,306.10. (45.96%)	9,592. 1. (10.42%)	8,378. 5. (9.10%)	19,635. 7. (21.33%)	12,130. 3. (13.18%)	92,042. 6.
London gifts to Bristol	10,473. 0. (57.67%)	2,180. 0. (12.00%)	3,120. 0. (17.18%)	1,320. 0. (7.27%)	1,067.0. (5.88%)	18,160. 0.

²⁷ *Vide* Jordan, W. K., *The charities of London, 1480-1660*, 63-80, *et passim*, London, Unwin, 1960.

it may be said that Bristol's parochialism was quite unmatched even by the almost fierce local pride of Norwich or the intense local concern of the squirearchy of Somerset. Bristol donors gave no more than the really trifling total of £732.4s. to the charitable needs of the rest of England, or 0.79 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth which they poured into the institutions of their own city.²⁸ It will further be observed in the table that follows that this paltry sum was almost wholly disposed in the surrounding area which was Bristol's own hinterland, a region to which the city owed a great deal indeed but towards which it all too evidently felt only slight social responsibility.²⁹ In fact, rather more than 87 per cent of all Bristol's extra-mural benefactions were made in the neighboring counties of Somerset and Gloucestershire, from which, it may be recalled, Bristol itself received more than ten times as much in charitable gifts. And to London, which had repaid Bristol so richly for the gift of men, Bristol was to contribute exactly nothing.

There were in all thirty-one donors who made extra-mural gifts, only three of which were in amounts exceeding £40, though eleven of these donors were merchants who evidently had trade connections in the surrounding counties and who had left most substantial benefactions to Bristol. By far the largest sum, £240 in all, was designated for the relief of the poor, to which all save four of these Bristol donors made some contribution, usually in small sums for distribution as doles, a form of poor relief almost unknown in Bristol after 1540. A total of £53 was provided for municipal uses in Bridgwater (Somerset) and Henbury (Gloucestershire), while there were several small benefactions for religious uses in these counties and in

²⁸ The proportion of total charitable wealth provided outside their borders by other counties in the regions studied are: Buckinghamshire, 4.85 per cent; Hampshire, 8.54 per cent; Kent, 4.20 per cent; Lancashire, 2.18 per cent; Norfolk, 2.40 per cent; Somerset, 0.87 per cent; Worcestershire, 3.11 per cent; Yorkshire, 2.61 per cent. London, of course, stands in august and amazing contrast to Bristol in this respect. Of the charitable wealth given by its citizenry, 30.95 per cent was devoted to building the social institutions of other counties.

²⁹ Extra-Bristol benefactions (university and fellowship endowments excluded):

County	Number of donors	Total benefactions £ s
Buckinghamshire	1	0. 7.
Dorset	1	20. 0.
Essex	1	0.13.
Gloucestershire	8	481. 0.
Herefordshire	1	2. 0.
Lancashire	1	3. 7.
Northamptonshire	2	12.10.
Oxfordshire	1	1. 0.
Somerset	9	159. 0.
Wiltshire	2	34. 7.
Ireland	1	5. 0.
Wales	3	13. 0.
	31	£732. 4s.

Ireland, and one contribution of £40 for educational uses in Yatton, Somerset, and in Newland, Gloucestershire. But the record suggests that no more than scraps of charity could be spared even for the nearby areas with which Bristol had for long had organic economic and social ties and from which much of its commercial greatness had been derived. Bristol was, as it was to remain for many years, a strangely parochial city, fiercely proud of the institutions and traditions which it had built with its own resources and, possibly in part for this very reason, just a little apart from the rest of the realm.

F. THE STRUCTURE OF ASPIRATIONS

1. THE POOR

Bristol remained until the last decades of our long period a prosperous and growing commercial and industrial community with relatively little unemployment save during the periods of trade stagnation in the realm at large. The cloth-manufacturing activities of the city, and of the west of England generally, were expanding to the detriment of the older centers of the industry during most of the era. Moreover, the Bristol economy was well diversified and, as we have observed, various new specialized undertakings were successfully developed by the entrepreneurs of the city towards the close of the sixteenth century. But there was nonetheless the problem of seasonal and cyclical unemployment in Bristol, while there lay against the conscience of responsible men in the community the chronic and universal problem of the aged and the unemployable. These problems and needs were attacked with great vigor and not a little imagination by the burgher aristocracy of Bristol, which during the course of our period poured the impressive total of £42,306.10s., or 45.96 per cent of the whole of their charities, into one or another form of poor relief. Of this total, the great sum of £25,628.17s., or 27.85 per cent of all charities, was provided for relief of the poor in their own households, if we include amounts left for general charitable purposes with those given more specifically for outright poor relief. And it is particularly significant that of this amount a total of £22,763.11s. was funded in a wide variety of endowments affording permanent succor and protection for the poor of the city. In addition to this extremely generous provision for the poor, £16,677.13s. was vested by Bristol donors in the foundation and endowment of a number of almshouses as places of refuge for those poor who were unemployable and who possessed no means of respectable support. The scale and solidity of Bristol's devotion to its social problems is shown in this generous outlay for almshouse foundations, amounting to 18.12 per cent of all the city's charitable funds and representing for this relatively small urban complex an outlay for this worthy purpose greater than that for Hampshire, Lancashire, and

Worcestershire combined. Furthermore, 98.62 per cent of this total was in capital form.

Bristol's sensitive concern with the problem of poverty was by no means a post-Reformation development, its resources for this purpose having been substantially mustered in at least defensive array by 1540. In these early decades the considerable total of £5,865.4s. was given for the various forms of poor relief, this amounting to about a third (34.85 per cent) of all charities in the interval. It is true that prior to 1530 most of the outlays for direct relief were in the older and somewhat dubious form of doles, save for the substantial almshouse endowments which had already been provided. But in the last decade of the interval, 1531-1540, large endowments totaling £2,950.4s. were established for systematic household relief, usually through parish officers, and for the enlargement of the existing almshouse resources of the community. There was in Bristol, as in all other regions, a rapid quickening of giving for the benefit of the poor during the short interval of the Reformation, when the large total of £4,927.14s., amounting to almost 62 per cent of all benefactions was designated for this use. Somewhat more than £3,000 was given during these two decades for the endowment of household relief, while the considerable sum of £1,915 was provided for the augmentation of the almshouse facilities of the city.

There was some slackening in the rate of giving for poor relief in the Elizabethan era, though the impressive total of £8,299.6s., of which 98.76 per cent was in endowments, was provided to strengthen the rapidly maturing resources for the care of the indigent. The large total of £5,514.16s., including £308 given for general charitable uses, was vested by a great many donors for household relief during these four decades, while a further addition of £2,784.10s. was made to almshouse endowments.

But the almost prodigal outpouring of funds for this purpose came during the early Stuart period, the first two decades of which were particularly prosperous for the community. In this generation £19,837.16s., or 58.72 per cent of all benefactions for the interval, was added to the already substantial resources possessed by the city for safeguarding itself from the scourge of poverty. Of this great sum, which amounted to almost half of the total vested for poor relief in the whole course of our period, £7,844.3s. was designated for almshouses, £6,953.13s. for household relief, and upwards of £5,000 for general charitable purposes, which almost invariably was interpreted to mean poor relief. This great surge of giving left Bristol in 1640 with perhaps uniquely strong resources for the care of the poor, and it accounts at least in part for the dramatic decline in benefactions for this purpose during the troubled and, for Bristol, disastrous interval of revolution. During these two decades, only £3,376.10s. was given by Bristol donors for the several forms of poor relief, an amount substantially less than was

provided for this purpose during the two equally troubled decades of the Reformation more than a century earlier.

We should now comment on at least the principal benefactions made for the endowment of poor relief, including certain gifts which we have formally classified as for "charity general" because of broader definitions of uses under the deeds of gift. Until about 1530 there had been only a modest flow of gifts and bequests for the outright relief of the poor, while almost the whole of the £373.1s. so provided from 1480 to 1530 had been in the customary form of funeral doles or the outright distribution of alms to needy persons in the city. This attitude towards the relief of poverty, not only eccentric but very possibly damaging, was to yield throughout England during the next generation as an aroused public conscience began through private charity to organize resources for the more systematic care of the unfortunate and as the state itself came gradually and grudgingly to recognize that there were both unemployed and unemployable persons within an economy which spawned poverty quite as surely as it also provided more economic opportunity than mankind had ever known before. This revolutionary transformation in the attitude towards the care of the poor, which substituted endowments for casual largesse, came very early in Bristol because of the generosity of Robert Thorne, a member of a great mercantile family of the city, who died in Spain in 1532. Furthermore, Thorne's magnificent bequests to the city, far more socially useful than those of Canyng, the great fifteenth-century benefactor, established a tradition of responsible civic generosity which supplied immensely effective social leverage as later merchants of the city paused to put their earthly affairs in order in contemplation of death.

The son of a prosperous Bristol merchant,³⁰ Robert Thorne (1492–1532) accumulated a great fortune in trade, representing his family in London and in Spain, where he was to die while still a comparatively young and an unmarried man.³¹ Thorne left a huge chari-

³⁰ Fox Bourne, H. R., *English merchants* 1: 153–156, London, 1866; *DNB*. The father, also Robert Thorne, was born about 1460. He built a flourishing trade as a clothier, an exporter of cloth, and a manufacturer of soap, in association with brothers who were prominent clothiers in Colchester and Reading. Thorne supported Cabot in his early exploratory voyages and was one of the Anglo-Portuguese syndicate chartered in 1502 to explore to the northeast. He established the family commercial connections with Spain, residing there for some time, and represented Bristol in Parliament shortly before his death in 1526. Robert was his eldest son; two others, Nicholas (1496–1546) and John (d. 1547), also played most prominent roles in Bristol's commercial and civic affairs. For the elder Robert Thorne, *vide post*, 35, 36. For the sons, *vide post*, 27, 33, *et passim*.

³¹ PCC 18 Thower 1532; *DNB*; Fuller, Thomas, *The history of the worthies of England*, ed. P. A. Nuttall, 3: 119, London, 1840; Fox Bourne, *English merchants* 1: 156–160; Hakluyt, Richard, *The principal navigations*, 250–258, London, 1589; Egerton MS.; PP 1822, 9: 481–491; PP 1823, 8: 597; Wadley, T. P., *Notes of the wills in the Great Orphan Book*, 180–182,

table estate to Bristol, all save £90 of which was for intensely secular purposes, and portions of which will be considered under other heads. His will provided £500 for the poor of London, while the large sum of £2,100 was left for the benefit of the poor of his native city. A total of £300 was to be employed for the relief "of the pore co'mons of Bristowe" according to the recommendation of two of "the best men of concyens that may be founde in eu'y p'issh" of the city, while an additional £300 was left to the municipal government as a permanent endowment to secure a store of corn which should be purchased in times of plenty and sold to the poor at cost in times of dearth. Further, Thorne left £500 for the relief of the poor in their own households, while Nicholas Thorne, his heir and executor, was instructed to employ £1,000 from the residue of the estate for general charitable uses and "good dedes of mercy to the relyef of the commons of Bristowe."

Numerous substantial endowments for poor relief ranging in amount from £60 to £400 could be mentioned between 1532 and 1580, but we shall content ourselves with recording the gift, shortly before 1556, of £2,000 by Sir John Gresham, a mercer and a famous philanthropist of London,³² which was to be invested in land and employed for the relief of the poor clothiers of Bristol.³³ Thomas Kelke, a Bristol merchant who had been mayor in 1573, on his death in 1583 left £20 to be distributed immediately to the poor of the city, as well as a fund of £200 to be used for poor relief during the following twenty years. Kelke also left £12 to provide clothing for twenty-four poor, marriage portions in the amount of £15, £20 for the repair of roads and conduits, and £20 to establish a stock of materials for "setting on work" such persons as might be committed to the house of correction.³⁴ A few years later,

Bristol, 1886. Robert Thorne was born in Bristol, apprenticed as a merchant tailor in London, and was shortly afterwards taken into his father's firm, which he represented in London and in Spain. In 1527 he urged upon the Crown the high necessity for bold exploration to find short sailing routes to the Indies by the northeast or the northwest, or even by sailing over the Pole. He contributed 1400 ducats to help defray the costs of the 1526 voyage of Sebastian Cabot, on which he sent two of his friends. He died in Seville in 1532, leaving an illegitimate son, Vincent, for whose future he provided with a bequest of £3,000. His charitable bequests, and gifts during his lifetime, totaled £6,775 for Bristol and London, the residue of the estate going to his brother, Nicholas.

³² *Vide Jordan, Charities of London*, 95, 225, 327, 329, 331.

³³ Corry, John, and John Evans, *History of Bristol* 1: 360, Bristol, 1816; *DNB*; Leveson Gower, Granville, *Genealogy of the family of Gresham*, 30–35, London, 1883.

³⁴ PCC 1 Butts 1583; Barrett, William, *The history and antiquities of Bristol*, 493, 615, Bristol, 1789; Wadley, *Wills*, 230; Egerton MS. *Vide post*, 35. Kelke ends his testament with the sentiment:

Oh Lord into thy handes I do committ
my sowle wch is thye dewe
ffor why thowe hast redeemeid it
my Lord & god most trewe.

in 1587, a Bristol brewer, John Griffin, in addition to small outright bequests to the poor and the vicar of Temple, bequeathed to the municipal authorities £100 to be employed for maintaining a stock of corn to be sold to the poor at reasonable prices, as well as real property with an estimated capital worth of £120, the income of which was to be distributed to the poor of his parish. He left, as well, £5 for repairs on Bedminster causeway and a conditional legacy for the maintenance of Temple Conduit, built in 1561.³⁵

Larger, if somewhat complicated, charitable bequests were left to Bristol in 1595 by Robert Kitchen, a merchant who had served his city as alderman and as sheriff in 1572, and as mayor in 1588. Kitchen's will devised to his executors his Bristol mansion house, which they were to sell at the most advantageous possible price in order to employ the funds thus derived for the benefit of the poor. The residue of his estate, after substantial legacies, was also to be used for the "best benefit" of the poor of Bristol. The executors, however, were slow in converting the estate into liquid capital and for some years seem to have made charitable distributions under the broad meaning of the will before settling the trust in final legal form. Eventually they purchased land in Christchurch, on which they erected a needed municipal improvement, butchers' shambles, at a cost of £560. In 1631 they paid to the municipal government £1,000, of which £600 was to be employed for the benefit of the poor: from the £600 it was arranged that £26 p.a. should be expended in each parish of the city in succession for the relief of decayed burgesses and their widows, while £6 p.a. should be used to relieve or set up in trade poor Kitchen kin, or, if none was eligible, to apprentice three fatherless children in three named parishes. The remaining £400 was to be used by the mayor for secured but interest-free loans to merchants and needy burgesses.

Abel Kitchen, the testator's son and likewise a merchant and mayor, was the principal executor. In 1640 he conveyed to the city by will the market shambles which had been an earlier investment of the executors, with the stipulation that its then income of £28 p.a. should be divided £17.10s. for the apprenticing of seven poor boys and girls, £2.10s. for the support of two poor and unmarried women, 13s.4d. for the poor of Westbury-on-Trym, Gloucestershire, and for an annual sermon there, £1.6s. for the distribution of bread in Christchurch parish, Bristol, and the remainder, after small distributions, to be retained in order to secure the income of the endowment. Two centuries later the Corporation was deriving £50.11s.6d. p. a. from these premises.³⁶

³⁵ PCC 37 Spencer 1587; Wadley, *Wills*, 248-249; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 553, 616; PP 1823, 8: 612.

³⁶ PCC 2 Scott 1595; Egerton MS.; PP 1823, 8: 590-596, 600; PP 1824, 13: 484-485; Barrett, *Bristol*, 422, 472, 590, 616; Fox, F. F., ed., *Adams's chronicle of Bristol*, 159, Bristol, Arrow-

We have observed that the great outpouring of endowments for the relief of the poor occurred in the early Stuart period, when the generous total of £19,837.16s. was accumulated for this purpose. We shall review briefly only a few of these gifts and bequests, selected to suggest their variety and social significance. Thus in 1601, Lady Mary Ramsay, the widow of a great London grocer and the daughter of William Dale, a merchant and sheriff of Bristol, among notable charitable bequests totaling very nearly £10,000,³⁷ remembered her native city with great generosity. In addition to her notable endowment for Queen Elizabeth's Hospital,³⁸ she gave £1,000 towards the purchase for £1,400 of certain valuable properties in Winterbourne, Gloucestershire, with the instruction that the rentals should be used by the city for general charitable purposes.³⁹ In 1617 Joan Murcott, the widow of a merchant adventurer and a rich vintner, left a capital sum of £200 for the relief of the poor of the city.⁴⁰ A few years later a gentleman of Stowey, Somerset, Thomas Jones, bequeathed £380 to the mayor and aldermen with the provision that the capital be invested in discreet loans to "nineteen poor, honest, thrifty young men, using some lawful trade or occupation," in such wise that the annual income should amount to £19. Of this sum, £10 p.a. was to be distributed to the indigent of the ten poorest parishes of Bristol, and particularly Redcliffe, £2 p.a. was to be awarded to the poor of Stowey, and a similar amount was to be paid to a learned preacher for four sermons each year in Stowey church, while the remainder was to be expended for purposes connected with the administration of the trust.⁴¹

One of the greatest of Bristol's merchants and certainly one of her chief benefactors was John Whitson, whose benefactions to the city may be fairly accurately valued at £8,090. Whitson settled most of his extensive real property, including the manor and farm of Burnett, Somerset, in a charitable trust by indenture in 1621 and added by will on his death in 1629 a residue of approximately £2,000 for "good uses of perpetuity within . . . Bristol." Leaving for later consideration his endowments for loans, almshouses, and education,⁴² there remains capital of £4,220, the income of which he wished to be employed for general charitable purposes and especially for the relief

smith, 1910; Nicholls, J. F., and John Taylor, *Bristol past and present* 1: 276, Bristol, 1881.

³⁷ Vide Jordan, *Charities of London*, 101-102, 181, 185, 228, 334.

³⁸ Vide post, 38.

³⁹ PCC 64 Woodhall 1601; *Adams's chronicle*, 159. Ann Colston, widow of a Bristol alderman (vide post, 29), added £200, while the city subscribed the remainder.

⁴⁰ PCC 84 Weldon 1617; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 618.

⁴¹ PCC 94 Swann 1623; Brown, Frederick, *Abstracts of Somersetshire wills*, ed. F. A. Crisp, 2: 52, n. pl., 1887; Egerton MS.; PP 1823, 8: 599; PP 1825, 11: 74. The date is wrong in the PP account.

⁴² Vide post, 30, 33, 38.

of the poor. Of this income, £20 p.a. was to be distributed for the "relief and comfort" of twenty poor and honest married women of the city in childbed, £2.10s. p.a. to poor householders of St. Nicholas parish, £20 p.a. for the support of twenty additional honest but poor women, £12 p.a. for the support of the poor of his native parish of Newland, Gloucestershire, while the income on the considerable remainder was to be employed for general charitable uses.⁴³

Another great merchant and entrepreneur, Robert Aldworth, an associate of Whitson, on his death in 1635 left to Bristol charities with a total value of £1,540. As we shall have a later occasion to note, his principal interest was in experimenting with the social rehabilitation of the poor,⁴⁴ but he left as well £100 to the feoffees of the church lands of St. Peter's parish, the income to be used for the relief of eight poor and aged women, approximately £240 to the employees of his own sugar refinery, £20 to poor tuckers and shermen, £20 outright to the poor of two named parishes, and £40 to the poor of Bristol's almshouses. During his lifetime Aldworth had built a parsonage at an estimated charge of £60, while his will provided £20 for the ornamentation of his parish church.⁴⁵ At about the same time, Robert Rogers, a prominent merchant and soap manufacturer, in addition to a generous loan fund of £100 which he vested in the city authorities,

⁴³ PCC 71 Ridley 1629; Egerton MS.; DNB; PP 1822, 9: 488, 490-497; Barrett, *Bristol*, 498; Brown, Alexander, *The genesis of the United States*, 1052, Boston, 1890; Little, *Bristol*, 120-121; *Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society Transactions* 68: 107-109, 1949. Whitson (1557-1629) was born in Newland, Gloucestershire, entering on his career as an apprentice to a Bristol winecooper and shipowner, whose widow Whitson married as the first of his three wives. He was twice master of the Society of Merchant Venturers. An active merchant and capitalist, Whitson helped in the organization of several voyages to America, being especially interested in the expedition of Martin Pring in 1603. He served as Bristol's mayor in 1603 and again in 1615, and his will suggests that an attempt was made on his life by an assailant who stabbed him in the face. Whitson represented Bristol in Parliament on four occasions (1605, 1620, 1625, 1625-1626). He was the author of a dull treatise entitled *The aged Christian's farewell to the world*. He was killed in a fall from his horse at the age of seventy-two. Whitson's estate was inventoried as being worth £ 5,408.17s.4d., not including "desperate debts" totaling £ 3,000 (McGrath, *Merchants and merchandise*, 80-89).

⁴⁴ *Vide post*, 32.

⁴⁵ PCC 3 Sadler 1635; PP 1823, 8: 598; PP 1825, 10: 373; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 274; Barrett, *Bristol*, 620; *New-England Historical and Genealogical Register* 47: 389, 1893; Latimer, John, *Annals of Bristol*, 45, Bristol, George, 1900. Aldworth (1561-1635) was a leading overseas merchant and a considerable shipowner. He constructed docks for the reception and fitting of his own vessels, one of which, the "Speedwell," made an early voyage to New England. He, with Whitson, helped in financing Pring's voyage to the Maine coast in 1603. In 1607 he purchased a mansion in Bristol and shortly afterwards built a large sugar refinery in St. Peter's churchyard. He was sheriff in 1596, mayor in 1609, and from 1614 until the time of his death was master of the Merchant Venturers.

made provision for a substantial endowment for the poor of Bristol. Two years afterwards, in 1635, his son, Sir Richard, who had settled as a gentleman at Thornbury, Gloucestershire, paid over his father's legacy and added from his own estate capital of approximately £300 to provide £7 p.a. for the poor of St. Thomas's parish, £4 p.a. for Redcliffe, and £4 p.a. for the use of the poor of Temple, as well as an annuity of £1 for a learned sermon to be preached annually at St. Thomas's.⁴⁶ And at the very close of the interval under consideration, an alderman and former mayor, George Harrington, left an interesting and substantial bequest for the benefit of certain poor of the city. Harrington had in 1638 given to the municipal authorities £540 subject to a life income and an undertaking to pay after his death, which occurred in 1640, £26 p.a. to poor householders and burghers of the several parishes at the rate of 10s. each week for those requiring support.⁴⁷ It may be noted that his widow and executrix, Thomasine Harrington, entered upon a somewhat similar agreement with the municipal authorities in 1642, providing a fund of £208 to secure bread distribution to the poor in three named parishes, with an assured value of £10.8s. p.a.⁴⁸

These, it must be emphasized, are but the largest or most interesting of many bequests and gifts made during this period of impressive generosity in providing for the needs of the unfortunate of the community. More typical and adding very substantially to the huge accumulation of funds for poor relief amassed from 1601 to 1640 were a flood of small benefactions, of which at least a sampling for three years (1605-1607) may be cited. Thus in 1605 Alice Cole, the widow of a mayor and the daughter of an alderman, provided £95 for the succor of the poor.⁴⁹ In the same year Thomas Cooper, a burgher, left £12 for clothing six poor men and six poor women;⁵⁰ a widow, Elizabeth Jones, bequeathed £1 for poor relief;⁵¹ while another woman, Joan Prewit, gave £20 for the clothing of poor women of the city.⁵² Margaret Tyndall left an annuity of £3 for poor relief in 1605, as well as a capital gift of about £45 for the same purpose;⁵³ in 1606 John Baber, Esq., left a dole of 10s. for the poor;⁵⁴ and a skinner, James Farley, bequeathed £1 for the needy.⁵⁵ A brewer, William Rockwell, left £1 to an almshouse and £1 to the poor of his parish in 1606,⁵⁶ while Thomas Treloue

⁴⁶ (Robert Rogers) PCC 47 Russell 1633; (Richard Rogers) PCC 98 Sadler 1635; PP 1822, 10: 210; PP 1823, 8: 599, 610; Barrett, *Bristol*, 563, 590.

⁴⁷ PCC 27 Coventry 1640; PP 1822, 9: 530.

⁴⁸ PCC 149 Alchin 1654; PP 1822, 9: 531-532.

⁴⁹ PCC 65 Hayes 1605; PP 1823, 8: 639; Barrett, *Bristol*, 617; Egerton MS.

⁵⁰ PCC 85 Hayes 1605.

⁵¹ PCC 52 Hayes 1605.

⁵² PCC 45 Hayes 1605.

⁵³ Wadley, *Wills*, 268-269.

⁵⁴ PCC 41 Stafford 1606.

⁵⁵ PCC 93 Stafford 1606.

⁵⁶ PCC 8 Stafford 1606.

made a bequest for poor relief in Worle and Wyke St. Lawrence, Somerset.⁵⁷ A merchant and former mayor, John Barker, in addition to a bequest for a gallery to be built in St. Augustine's Church and an earlier gift of £25 towards finishing the conduit at the quay, left £20 for the relief of poor orphans under the terms of his will proved in 1607;⁵⁸ and in the same year a pewterer, John Burns, bequeathed £3 to the poor,⁵⁹ and a tradesman and alderman, William Paughery, provided £5 for the same purpose.⁶⁰ The tradition of responsibility had been well and surely established in Bristol by this generation, almost every burgher adding at least a modest sum for the augmentation of the now massive resources which the community had gathered in its struggle against the erosive forces of poverty and want.

In the course of our final interval, as we have earlier noted, there was a very steep decline in the rate of giving for poor relief. Nonetheless, a total of £3,376.10s. was designated for this purpose during the two decades of revolutionary turmoil. At least the principal of these benefactions should be noted. In 1653 the will of Hugh Brown, a rich merchant and a former mayor of the city, who had earlier been a generous benefactor to the Merchant Venturers' Almshouse,⁶¹ provided annuities, with a total capital worth of £288, for the relief of the poor in the several parishes of the city, as well as funds to secure the distribution of ninety-seven gowns to poor men of Bristol.⁶² Shortly afterwards, in 1655, the considerable sum of £270 was raised by charitable subscription in Bristol for the relief of the Savoy Protestants.⁶³ At the close of our period, in 1660, Joan Langton, a merchant's widow, recited in her will the fact that her mother, Mary Butcher, who had died in 1651, had left in trust with her the sum of £300 to be employed for charitable purposes. Mrs. Langton in her turn directed her executors to add as much from her own estate and then to convey the whole capital of £600 to private trustees, who were to purchase lands with an annual worth of at least £26 in order to secure the support of fifty-two poor widows whose husbands had been free burgesses of the city. All parishes within the city were to benefit save for

St. Michael's, for which the testator had previously provided a similar trust fund.⁶⁴

In all, we have observed, the benefactors of Bristol had given during the course of our period the large total of £18,932.1s. for the household relief of the poor, as well as funds amounting to £6,696.16s. designated for general charitable purposes which were in fact employed for poor relief. Not the whole of this was capital, but by 1660 endowments totaling £22,763.11s. had been accumulated to secure the maintenance of the poor in their own households. At the prevailing rate of return gained by Bristol trustees on charitable endowments, there must have been available for various types of outright relief not less than £1,138 p.a., which, with the standards then viewed as adequate, would have offered at least bare subsistence to something like 455 poor households in a city which had scarcely attained a population of 20,000 even by the close of our period.

To these considerable and possibly sufficient resources built up by pious and responsible men for the care of the unemployed and the casual poor was added by persistent accumulation the large total of £16,677.13s. for the building and endowment of almshouses, of which almost the whole (98.62 per cent) was in the form of capital gifts. This sum was gathered in slow stages. From the beginning of our period, benefactors had before them the examples of several notably successful fifteenth-century foundations created by substantial merchants who had sensed the needs of a new age with a quite amazing prescience. In the decades just prior to the Reformation, the considerable total of £3,162 was provided by Bristol donors either for the establishment of new almshouses or for the strengthening of older foundations, while during the two decades of the Reformation the proportionately much larger total of £1,915 was given for these purposes. During the Elizabethan age £2,784.10s. was added to the almshouse resources of the city, while in the early Stuart period the large sum of £7,844.3s., almost half the total for our entire period, was vested in foundations for the care of the unemployable poor. The needs of the city had nearly been met by the time of the outbreak of the Civil War, which was to be so disastrous to the commercial and civil life of Bristol, but even so gifts and bequests totaling £972 were made during these years for the further strengthening of the resources already accumulated for the support of this particularly beneficent form of early modern charity.

These great foundations had doubtless been in part inspired by the fact that Bristol was in 1480 as richly endowed with surviving and functioning almshouses as any city of roughly comparable size in England.

⁵⁷ PCC 3 Stafford 1606.
⁵⁸ PCC 82 Hudleston 1607; Barrett, *Bristol*, 617; Egerton MS.
⁵⁹ PCC 59 Hudleston 1607.
⁶⁰ PCC 46 Hudleston 1607.
⁶¹ *Vide post*, 30.
⁶² PCC 490 Alchin 1654; Barrett, *Bristol*, 620; *Bristol Record Society* 6: 245, 1935; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 68: 102, 1949. The son of Edmund Brown, a Bristol merchant, this donor was a member of the Merchant Venturers, having been the master of the company on three occasions. He was an alderman for Redcliffe, 1646-1653, and mayor, 1650-1651. He was a warm supporter of the Parliamentary cause. Brown acquired considerable landed estates in Gloucestershire; he was lord of the manor against which his charities were charged.
⁶³ Latimer, *Annals*, 261.

⁶⁴ (Butcher) PCC Administrations, 1651, f. 176; (Langton) PCC 304 Nabbs 1660; *PP* 1822, 10: 270; *PP* 1823, 9: 368; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 6: 264-265, 1935; Barrett, *Bristol*, 422. John Langton, the testator's husband, was a member of the Common Council and had lent £200 to Parliament, which had not been repaid in 1653.

During the long course of the Middle Ages, thirteen hospitals had been founded in Bristol, of which the majority had some endowment, and of these eight or possibly nine appear at least in certain periods to have fulfilled the functions which the sixteenth century came to associate with almshouses. Five of these foundations survived in 1480, of which three were relatively early establishments. The oldest was probably St. Lawrence, said to have been founded by King John in 1208 as a leper hospital. The institution was in a serious state of decay in the mid-fifteenth century when its endowments were transferred to the College of Westbury. The value of these endowments in 1535 was reckoned at £12.8s.2d. p.a., though it must be noted that only 16s. annually was actually being employed for the support of the four almspeople there sheltered. This hospital was confiscated with the Westbury foundation in 1544.⁶⁵ Gaunt's Hospital (St. Mark's) in Billeswick had been founded a few years later (1230) by Maurice de Gaunt as an almonry, with an endowment so generous that it was dispensing alms to a hundred poor during much of the thirteenth century, but it too was badly administered and the endowments permitted so to decay that at the beginning of the fifteenth century not more than five almsmen were being supported by its resources. The hospital was in 1539 confiscated by the Crown, the premises being sold to the city two years afterwards. The remaining early medieval foundation was that of St. Bartholomew, established before 1275 with a very small endowment. The house was in decay in 1445 when Bristol merchants established there a fraternity of mariners which supported a priest and twelve poor mariners obligated to pray for seamen and merchants "labouring on the sea." In 1531, as we shall later note, the property was conveyed by its patron Lord de la Warre to the great Bristol merchant, Robert Thorne, as part of the plan to found a grammar school at Westbury-on-Trym.⁶⁶

A later and certainly sturdy foundation was that of Trinity Hospital, founded about 1408 by John Barstaple, a Bristol merchant. The founder carefully vested the control of his house in the mayor and commonalty of the city and endowed it with funds, worth £16.10s. p.a. by 1480, for the support of six poor men and as many poor women. This almshouse, fulfilling as it did a valuable philanthropic need of the community, was not molested in the Reformation settlement, though the financial control was more securely vested in the city by an Elizabethan grant. And, finally, there was a small almshouse for six poor founded shortly before the beginning of our period by the younger William Canyng, with what

⁶⁵ Gairdner, James, and R. H. Brodie, eds., *Letters and papers . . . Henry VIII* 19 (1): 120, London, His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1903.

⁶⁶ Dugdale, William, *Monasticon anglicanum* 6 (2): 774, London, 1846. *Vide post*, 37.

was shortly to prove a quite inadequate endowment. In all, then, the surviving medieval foundations, of which only two were really soundly endowed and administered, provided shelter and subsistence for something like thirty-nine almspeople at the opening of our period, no estimate being possible of the endowed wealth which they disposed.

The earliest of the early modern foundations was that made, probably in 1489, by a rich Bristol merchant, Robert Strange, who though a native of Cirencester had thrice served his city as mayor. Strange built his almshouse for fifteen poor in St. John's parish and settled on it a presumably adequate endowment, the fate of which has been the subject of some controversy.⁶⁷

Shortly afterwards, in 1492, another merchant and mayor of Bristol, John Foster, by his will arranged for the endowment of a chapel and almshouse which he had erected some years previously at an estimated charge of £300. Foster had built the chapel in the parish of St. Michael "in the honour of God, to the three Kings of Cologne," adjoining his almshouse, which contained fourteen rooms and as many garden plots for a resident priest and thirteen almspeople, five of whom were poor women. Foster's will provided that after certain life interests his executors, John Walsh and John Esterfeld, should endow the almshouse with properties which some sixty years later possessed a capital value of upwards of £700. It is clear that Walsh diverted certain of the properties to his own use, but upon his death lodged in Esterfeld properties in Bristol of roughly equivalent value.⁶⁸ Esterfeld, himself a leading merchant who had been Mayor of Bristol in 1488 and again in 1495, undertook to secure the solid endowment of the foundation by creating a trusteeship to which he conveyed the fragments of Foster's bequest, at last gathered in his hands, with additional properties from his own estate, in order to add £5.7s. p.a. for the support of the priest and £3 p.a. for the almspeople. Esterfeld further secured the foundation against legal misadventure by purchasing the fee of the land on which the almshouse stood from the monastery of Tewkesbury and expended up-

⁶⁷ *PP* 1824, 13: 457; Barrett, *Bristol*, 613; *Adams's chronicle*, 73. Strange was Mayor of Bristol in 1474, 1482, and 1489, serving as well as a Member of Parliament. In 1479 he was imprisoned by the Crown under a specious accusation of coining false money, his accuser being hanged and quartered for his pains. Barrett alleges that the parish officers embezzled the endowment, cutting several leaves from the parish books to conceal their illegalities, as well as defacing Strange's tomb, the inscription on which recited the facts of the foundation. The parliamentary commission investigating the matter in the nineteenth century reached a "not proven" conclusion with respect to the allegation, but it seems evident that the original endowment had in fact been lost by the early eighteenth century.

⁶⁸ PCC 9 Dogett 1492; *PP* 1822, 9: 520; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 30: 200, 1907; *Adams's chronicle*, 74; Egerton MS. Foster was Sheriff of Bristol in 1474, Mayor in 1481, and a Member of Parliament in 1489.

ward of £100 on the repair of the fabric. The indenture creating the trust provided that the mayor and the alderman were to name seven of the almsmen and the mayoress four of the poor women, while the two remaining almspeople were to be nominated by the master of another hospital.⁶⁹ Foster's almshouse, now well secured, enjoyed the approbation of the burgher aristocracy of Bristol for many years, being a favorite charity for substantial capital bequests. In 1553 it received a considerable addition to its resources by the gift of Dr. George Owen of London, who conveyed to the municipal authorities properties, most of which had formerly belonged to the military monks of St. John, and possessing a capital value of £606, in order to secure the support of ten additional poor men, to be nominated by the mayor and aldermen, each of whom should receive 7d. weekly, while additional properties were added to ensure an annual payment of £4 to the master of the grammar school of Redcliffe Hill⁷⁰ and £12 p.a. for the support of the clergy.⁷¹

Still another of the merchant mayors of Bristol, William Spencer, the executor of William Canyng's will, who had built the almshouse in Lewin's Mead in accordance with his friend's bequest, added substantially to the charitable funds of his native city. By deed and will in 1494 he devised £67.6s.8d. as a capital addition to the endowment of Canyng's almshouse, as well as £4 p.a. to pay three priests sufficiently "learned in sacred divinity" to preach at St. Mary at Redcliffe before the mayor and commonalty and £20 to be lent perpetually to the Mayor of Bristol during his tenure of office.⁷² This almshouse, too, usually referred to as "Spencer's Almshouse," was the frequent beneficiary of modest capital bequests from Bristol's merchants and tradesmen during the next two generations, with one substantial gift by Thomas Brooke in 1536 of an inn in Tucker Street with a then capital value of £120.⁷³

⁶⁹ PCC 26 Holgrave 1504; Barrett, *Bristol*, 434; PP 1822, 9: 520; Wadley, *Wills*, 177-179; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 219. Esterfeld was bailiff in 1482, twice mayor, and represented Bristol in two parliaments.

⁷⁰ *Vide post*, 36.

⁷¹ PCC 11 Chaynay 1559; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 434, 596, 614; PP 1822, 9: 526. A native of Worle, Somerset, Owen was educated at Oxford. He was licensed to practice in 1525, soon afterwards being appointed physician to Henry VIII and attending the birth of Edward VI. The grateful King gave him considerable monastic property, to which Owen added by careful purchases from his own funds. He was one of the witnesses to the King's will, in which he was left £ 100. He served as physician to Edward VI; and until his death in an epidemic of intermittent fever in 1558 was physician to Queen Mary.

⁷² PCC 17 Vox 1494; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 613; PP 1823, 8: 607; PP 1823, 9: 392; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 217. Spencer, a rich and much respected merchant, was three times mayor of the city and was twice a Member of Parliament.

⁷³ PCC 37 Hogen 1536; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 231; *Adams's chronicle*, 81, 86. Brooke had been mayor of the city in 1526.

John Matthew, a draper, under his will proved in 1521 left five tenements with a then capital worth of about £360 to secure the additional endowment of Trinity Almshouse, which, as we have noted, had been founded rather more than a century earlier by another Bristol merchant.⁷⁴ Trinity Almshouse, as well as the four other now well-established institutions, benefited substantially in 1532 under the terms of the will of the great Bristol merchant, Robert Thorne, who, in addition to his other large bequests for the relief of the poor of Bristol,⁷⁵ left £500 for the further endowment of the city's almshouses. This example was followed just a decade later by gifts and bequests from a friend of Thorne's, Thomas White, whose total benefactions to his city were only a little short of £1,000. White, who had in 1530 established a rent-charge of £2.8s. p.a. for the relief of the poor in Bristol, in 1539 constituted a trust to which he conveyed properties in the city and in Gloucestershire with a capital value of £208 for the further endowment of Bristol's almshouses, as well as £2 p.a. for the maintenance of conduits. Somewhat later, under the terms of his will, tenements in Bristol were added worth £312 for the additional support of Trinity Almshouse, which so interested the commercial aristocracy of the city.⁷⁶ Still another merchant mayor, William Pykes, in 1550, left property with an annual value of £6.13s.4d. for the augmentation of almshouse endowments, as well as £50 for the amendment of the highways of Bristol, £20 outright to the poor of St. Thomas's parish, and £20 for the extension of the water conduit into that parish.⁷⁷ A few

⁷⁴ PCC 17 Maynwaryng 1521; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 36: 263, 1913; Barrett, *Bristol*, 536; *Adams's chronicle*, 80; PP 1822, 9: 506. The property did not become available to the trustees until 1564, being subject to remainder interests.

⁷⁵ *Vide ante*, 19, 22, and *post*, 33, 35, 37, 42, 43.

⁷⁶ PCC 9 Spert 1542; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 560, 613; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 236; *Adams's chronicle*, 88; PP 1823, 8: 605-607. White, with Nicholas Thorne, provided sumptuous entertainment for Henry VIII and Queen Anne on the occasion of the royal visit to Bristol in 1534. White was mayor of the city in 1530. The terms of his will were not precisely carried out, the intended payment of £15.12s.8d. p.a. to almshouses having been reduced to £ 9.12s. p.a., the difference in large part having been devoted to an annual payment of £ 4.19s.4d. to the City of Bristol. In addition to substantial bequests which will be noted later (*post*, 34, 43), White left £ 2 p.a. for the repair of conduits, £ 20 for marriage portions, £ 1.1s.8d. p.a. for the relief of prisoners, £ 6.13s. for church repairs, £ 6 for the general uses of the Church, and a small bequest for prayers.

⁷⁷ Wadley, *Wills*, 187-188; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 560, 564, 614; PP 1822, 10: 232; *Adams's chronicle*, 87, 99; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 242. A mercer, Pykes was sheriff in 1532 and mayor in 1548. A serious riot occurred during his mayoralty, which he, with the aid of William Chester, a former mayor, put down with rigor tempered with humanity. Pykes was evidently a confirmed Protestant. His will confesses Christ to be "the verye true and onlie meritor for as many as shalbe savid And that no good wurkes that I haue doon nor that other canne do for me can save me, But onlie the mooste holsome passion, and glorious resurrection of mye Savior Jh'us Criste."

years later, in 1557, Francis Codrington, also a merchant, bequeathed an additional £50 to the endowment of Trinity Almshouse, the income to be used for making and repairing the bedding in the hospital for the comfort of the poor lodged there and for the reception, for not more than three nights, of "sore, sick or otherwise destitute" people passing through Bristol.⁷⁸

William Chester, a great merchant who was twice mayor, built an additional almshouse for the city, probably in the reign of Edward VI, which he substantially endowed under his will proved in 1559. Chester had purchased the site of the convent of the Black Friars in 1539, scandalizing the still Catholic city by converting a portion of the premises into an orchard and laying out a bowling alley in the bishop's garden. Somewhat later, however, he built his almshouse for six poor on the site, to the rear of his own residence, where he maintained his almspeople during the remainder of his life. His will provided an endowment with a capital value of £156 for the support of the inmates, as well as bestowing £10 in doles for the poor and £2 for the repair of the highway leading from Bristol to Westerleigh in Gloucestershire.⁷⁹

At about the same time, and certainly prior to 1561, the Merchant Venturers Society, incorporated by Edward VI in 1552, which included the commercial elite of the community, built an extensive almshouse for the care of aged and indigent seamen, at an estimated charge of £250. The establishment was at first unendowed, but its considerable charities were supported by a levy of 1½d. per ton on the cargoes of the Venturers and by an impost of 1d. in the pound on sailors' wages.⁸⁰ An elaborate and prudent trusteeship was established for the almshouse, which by the close of the century was disbursing something like £100 p.a. to almspeople, pensioners, and unemployed or injured seamen.⁸¹ The almshouse was generously maintained not only by the direct contributions of the Society but likewise by numerous bequests from merchant members, among which that of John Brown in

⁷⁸ PCC 41 Wrastley 1557; Wadley, *Wills*, 185; *Adams's chronicle*, 95; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 32: 92, 1909. Codrington, who was sheriff in 1542, was a witness to Nicholas Thorne's will and served as one of his trustees.

⁷⁹ PCC 52 Chaynay 1559; *PP* 1823, 9: 399; Waters, R. E. C., *Genealogical memoirs of the families of Chester of Bristol*, 8-11, London, 1881. Chester, a remote cousin of the great London merchant of the same name, was sheriff in 1522, mayor in 1537 and 1552, and a Member of Parliament for Bristol. He inherited a considerable fortune from his father, John, also a leading Bristol merchant. He married first a daughter of a former mayor and secondly the widow of another. Chester was evidently without strong religious inclinations, being regarded as a lukewarm Catholic. He was denounced by a zealous reformer as "that double knave . . . for sometimes he is with us and sometimes with the knaves; but he shall be a long knave for it, and his wife a foolish drab, for she is the enemy of God's word."

⁸⁰ Latimer, John, *Sixteenth-century Bristol*, 107, Bristol, Arrowsmith, 1908.

⁸¹ *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 17: *passim*, 1951; *PP* 1823, 8: 613-615.

1595 is typical. Brown, a resident of St. Nicholas's parish, who had been Mayor of Bristol in 1572, bequeathed to feoffees property valued at £5.5s. p.a., of which £1.6s.8d. p.a. was to be employed in rotation, one year for clothing for the poor in the "merchants almshouse," and then for the next two years for the poor of his own parish, while the residue was to be used for the repair of his parish church.⁸² This almshouse, supported adequately in the sixteenth century by the Society and by modest bequests from individual merchants, was, as we shall note, to be most generously endowed in the seventeenth century by the next generation of Bristol merchants.⁸³

Very considerable gains indeed had been made in providing for the care of the unemployable poor during the first eighty years of our period. While two of the decayed medieval foundations had been confiscated because of their organic connection with monastic establishments, four new almshouses had been founded prior to 1561 and two of the surviving medieval institutions had been reorganized and revitalized with successive and substantial augmentations of their old and wholly inadequate endowments. Upwards of £5,000 had been vested by Bristol donors in old or new almshouses, numbering in total seven in 1561 and accommodating about sixty almspeople. These donors, large and small, had built well and prudently, and Bristolians in the early years of the Elizabethan era evidently felt that these institutions were all but sufficient for the needs of the indigent of the community. But the rapid growth of Bristol in this period, mounting seasonal unemployment, and, even more significantly, the growing social sensitivity of the burgher aristocracy were to lead after almost twenty years of comparative want of interest in almshouse endowments to another period of foundation and endowment which was to last for a full generation.

One of the earliest of the Elizabethan augmentations was a bequest by a Bristol merchant, Philip Griffith, of three houses and three shops, possessing a capital value of about £210, to be added to the endowment of William Chester's almshouse.⁸⁴ Shortly afterwards, a new foundation, the Merchant Tailors' almshouse, was created under the will of John Wilson, a draper who died in 1588 leaving two tenements and certain other

⁸² PCC 71 Scott 1595; Egerton MS.; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 264 (but the authors are surely wrong in valuing this at £30.6s. p.a.); Barrett, *Bristol*, 616; *PP* 1824, 13: 419.

⁸³ S.P.Dom. 1595, CCLIV: 6. In 1595 the Privy Council ordered its benefits extended to "such as go fishing voyages to Newfoundland."

⁸⁴ *PP* 1823, 9: 400; *PP* 1824, 13: 458-459; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 14: 129, 1948. Griffith, who may have been descended from a Welsh mason domiciled in Bristol as early as 1539, was, with William Chester, founder of the almshouse, a grandfather of William Chester (d. 1607), who was a landed gentleman of Gloucestershire, being appointed high sheriff of that county in 1592. Chester in 1585 confirmed to feoffees the property mentioned above, with one other house and a shop of uncertain value.

properties with an estimated total capital value of £300 for its support. The company, under the name "the fraternity of Saint John the Baptist," had its origins in a medieval tailors' guild and held properties which had survived the confiscation of the chantries. Smaller bequests were made after Wilson's foundation, including a direct appropriation of £96 by the company, with the result that the almshouse was by 1600 endowed with lands yielding £16.5s.10d. p.a.⁸⁵ Merchants in the later years of the Elizabethan era almost invariably included in their wills at least modest sums for the older almshouses, as did Thomas Aldworth in 1598, who also left £108 for other general charitable uses,⁸⁶ and Richard Cole who in the next year left £4 p.a. to augment the stock of Chester's almshouse, 10s. p.a. to Spencer's almshouse, and smaller amounts to older foundations, as well as a large endowment to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital,⁸⁷ £85 for outright relief of the poor, £30 for the repair of roads, and £20 for marriage portions.⁸⁸

Two women, both being widows of prominent merchants, were substantial benefactors to Bristol's almshouses early in the seventeenth century. Ann Colston, the widow of Thomas, a grocer who was in 1577 Mayor of Bristol, in 1604 left £200 to the mayor and commonalty under agreement to pay £4 p.a. in perpetuity to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital and as much as an augmentation of the income of both Chester's almshouse and the Merchant Tailors' foundation.⁸⁹ In the following year Alice Cole, a sister of John Carr, a daughter of a merchant and an alderman, and the widow of a merchant and mayor, left a large estate, with charities totaling £1,195. In addition to provision for the poor, for the maintenance of "a godly preacher," an annual stipend for the relief of prisoners, and a substantial endowment for apprenticeships, her will bestowed £4 p.a. to four of the almshouses of the city, representing a capital augmentation of approximately £320.⁹⁰

These are but the larger of a steady stream of sup-

⁸⁵ PCC 38 Rutland 1588; Barrett, *Bristol*, 616 (Barrett must be in error in his statement that Wilson's bequest was worth £26 p.a.); *PP* 1824, 13: 553-555.

⁸⁶ PCC 25 Kidd 1598; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 493, 617; *New-England Hist. and Gen. Reg.* 46: 440, 1892; *Adams's chronicle*, 118-120, 140, 186. Aldworth was mayor in 1582 and again in 1592. In 1585 he, with a London haberdasher, relieved a serious grain scarcity in the Severn Basin by bringing in five shiploads of grain valued at £2,600, which was distributed at far below the prevailing panic price of 7s. a bushel for wheat. This charitable act was credited with quieting a panic which might easily have developed into a serious public crisis.

⁸⁷ *Vide post*, 36, 38.

⁸⁸ PCC 64 Kidd 1599; Egerton MS.; *PP* 1823, 8: 608-609; *PP* 1824, 13: 475; *Adams's chronicle*, 110; Barrett, *Bristol*, 616. Cole, a mercer, was sheriff in 1569 and mayor in 1585.

⁸⁹ PCC 28 Harte 1604; *PP* 1822, 9: 468; Barrett, *Bristol*, 617; *Adams's chronicle*, 159.

⁹⁰ PCC 65 Hayes 1605; *PP* 1823, 8: 639; Barrett, *Bristol*, 617.

porting legacies given to Bristol's almshouses during the early Stuart period when a total of nearly £8,000 was added to the resources with which hopeless poverty was being relieved in the community. At least a few of the many modest gifts, which were in total to result in a most substantial augmentation of endowments, may be briefly mentioned. Thus in 1613 Thomas Rice, a clergyman in nearby Somerset, left £1 p.a. for the support of Bristol's almshouses,⁹¹ while in 1616 John Hopkins, a fishmonger and former mayor, gave £10 to the Merchant Venturers' house.⁹² A tradesman, William Baldwin, in 1617 vested a rent-charge of 10s. p.a. for better maintenance of almsmen;⁹³ in the next year a merchant's widow, Elizabeth Hopkins, bequeathed £5 of capital to the Merchant Venturers' almshouse and an equal amount to the Merchant Tailors'.⁹⁴ Susan Forde, a tradesman's widow, left 3s.4d. to an almshouse endowment in 1619,⁹⁵ while in the same year Thomas James, a former mayor and Member of Parliament, left 5s. to every hospital in Bristol, as well as £20 for poor relief and £1 to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital.⁹⁶ A clothworker, Francis Baylie, provided £10 as a capital gift to an almshouse in 1620,⁹⁷ and a baker, William Weale, gave a total of £3.15s. to four of the city's foundations in the same year.⁹⁸

There were in this same interval numerous larger bequests, of which two may be regarded as typical. Thus in 1617 Thomas Brook, a trustee of Spencer's almshouse, conveyed extensive property valued at approximately £500, comprising eight houses and two shops in Bristol, forty acres of land in Somerset, and a small rent-charge, as further endowment for that foundation, subject only to a life interest for himself and his wife.⁹⁹ Three years later William Vawer, a merchant and cardmaker, in addition to small legacies to the poor and to his company, by will confirmed and enfeoffed lands in Pembrokeshire then valued at £8 p.a. for the support and clothing of five poor almsmen, who should attend the mayor at church each Sunday.¹⁰⁰

By far the largest of the almshouse foundations made during our entire period was created in successive stages by Thomas White, son of a Bristol clothier, and an enormously wealthy London clergyman. White in 1613 founded an almshouse in Temple Street, incorporating ten houses with a then value of approximately £600. He endowed the institution in 1621 with

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 549.

⁹² *PP* 1823, 8: 616; Egerton MS., which dates the benefaction as 1610.

⁹³ *PP* 1825, 10: 375.

⁹⁴ *PP* 1823, 8: 616; *PP* 1824, 13: 563; Egerton MS.

⁹⁵ PCC 31 Parker 1619.

⁹⁶ PCC 16 Parker 1619.

⁹⁷ PCC 69 Soame 1620.

⁹⁸ PCC 19 Soame 1620.

⁹⁹ PCC 80 Parker 1619; *PP* 1823, 9: 394-395. Brook was a rich haberdasher.

¹⁰⁰ PCC 120 Soame 1620; *Adams's chronicle*, 122; *PP* 1834, 22: 718.

Bristol and London properties then worth £52 p.a., to which he added later in the same year other properties with a value of £20 p.a., for the support on the foundation of nine poor men and three poor women. By the terms of his will, proved in 1624, he endowed the hospital with an additional £40 p.a. and provided that further capital of the same value should be conveyed to the trustees upon the death of his brother. In total, therefore, his gifts for the establishment and endowment of Temple Almshouse reached the great sum of £3,640. Nor was this the full measure of White's generosity to his native city, for, as we shall note, in addition to a small outright bequest for £40 for the relief of prisoners, he provided very large endowments for the maintenance of highways and for lectureships in Bristol churches.¹⁰¹

Just five years later, another of Bristol's great benefactors, John Whitson, left by will property with a then capital value of £520 for the augmentation of the endowments of the Merchant Venturers' almshouse.¹⁰² These two great benefactions of White and Whitson together account principally for the large sum of £5,835 which was added to the almshouse endowments of Bristol during a single decade, a decade, it might be noted, in which the amazing total of £13,125.18s. was provided by Bristol's donors for the various forms of poor relief, or nearly a third of the great accumulation for these purposes during our entire period. Bristol at the close of the early Stuart period possessed numerous almshouses, five of which were now richly endowed. It is doubtful whether any other city in England was as competently provided with institutions for the alleviation of that hopeless poverty which so weighed on the conscience of the early modern world. A relatively small group of men, almost all of them members of the mercantile aristocracy, had taken bold and generous measures in an effort to rid the city, in which they had an almost overweening pride, of this haunting curse.

¹⁰¹ PCC 22 Byrde 1624; Egerton MS.; Reading, William, *The history of Sion College*, London, 1724; DNB; PP 1823, 8: 286, 575-585; PP 1835, 21: 458-467; PP 1840, 19 (1): 121; PP 1902, 76 (St. Dunstan's): 5, 16-17; PP 1904, 71: 809. White nearly exhausted his large estate by his charities in the course of his lifetime and by those ordered in his will; upwards of £19,000 of his fortune was devoted to charity. He dedicated most of his larger benefactions to the needs of London and founded Sion College there with a bequest of about £3,000. Born in Temple Street, Bristol, educated at Oxford, where he was graduated in 1570, he was made Vicar of St. Dunstan's in the West in 1575 and became very well known in London as a preacher and writer of Puritan persuasion. He was appointed Treasurer of Salisbury in 1590, Canon of Christ Church in 1591, and Canon of Windsor in 1593. A learned and gentle man, he established and endowed his many munificent charities in a remarkably self-effacing manner. For a fuller discussion, *vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 154-155, 205, 254-255, 287.

¹⁰² PCC 71 Ridley 1629; *vide ante*, 23, and *post*, 33, 38, for Whitson's other and larger benefactions.

There were substantial additions made to the alms-house resources of the city during the revolutionary period, though it is evident that the great era of foundations and augmentations was well past. Richard Long, a former master of the Merchant Venturers and a former mayor, in about 1650, in addition to bequests of £125 for the relief of the poor of St. Stephen's and St. Werburgh, left to the Merchant Venturers' alms-house lands then possessing a capital value of £200, the income to be used for clothing ten poor almsmen in "ten several coats to be made of . . . coloured cloth at 8s. a yard at the least, which should reach down to their gartering place, and ten several caps of the same cloth, [or] else ten Monmouth caps of the same colour, and ten pair of white stockings knit, and ten pair of shoes for them, to be laid out every third half year."¹⁰³

Shortly afterwards, in 1652, still another almshouse was built in St. Nicholas's parish by unknown donors on land conveyed to the feoffees of the church lands by the Corporation of Bristol, subject only to a nominal rent-charge. The feoffees erected a large almshouse, at a cost which can be very roughly reckoned at £300, for fifteen almspeople and a master and mistress. There appears to have been no endowment provided for this establishment, at least during our period, and it may be supposed that the poor sheltered in the institution were supported by private alms and possibly by rates.¹⁰⁴

In the next year, 1653, the last substantial alms-house endowment was made by a merchant and a recent mayor, Hugh Brown, whose generous benefactions for the household relief of the poor of Bristol have already been noted.¹⁰⁵ While mayor in 1650, Brown had entered into bonds with the warden of the Merchant Venturers to support two additional almsmen in their institution. By the terms of his will, proved in 1654, Brown bequeathed property then valued at £150 to ensure the support in perpetuity of his two almsmen, while adding £100 of further endowment to be employed either for the maintenance of two more almsmen or of a poor mariner's widow in her own household.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 6: 252-253, 1935; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 293; PP 1822, 9: 532; PP 1823, 8: 618; PP 1824, 13: 528. Richard Long was the son of Thomas Long, a merchant of Axminster, Devon. Apprenticed to a Bristol merchant in 1600, he was made a burgess in 1608. He was successively a councillor (1618-1645), alderman (1636-1645), and mayor (1636) of his city. A Member of Parliament for Bristol in 1640, he was expelled from the House of Commons in 1642 for his outspoken Royalism and was dismissed from the Bristol Council in 1645 by parliamentary ordinance for the same offense. He was obliged to compound for his delinquency in 1646, being fined £800, or an estimated tenth of his goods. He was long interested in trading to Newfoundland and with two of his associates owned the ship "Mary Rose."

¹⁰⁴ PP 1824, 13: 445-446; Barrett, *Bristol*, 505.

¹⁰⁵ *Vide ante*, 25.

¹⁰⁶ PCC 490 Alchin 1654; PP 1823, 8: 619-621.

The benefactors of Bristol during the course of our period had given the large total of £16,677.13s. towards the development of a system of almshouse relief which must have been unmatched in any English city in this age. There were in Bristol at the close of our era ten almshouses, of which nine were endowed. It is interesting to observe that of the great total given for the support of almshouses only the tiny sum of £229.13s. had been provided in the form of gifts for current use, even the modest donors tending to help augment the endowments of institutions which were evidently making most significant contributions to the well-being of the city. A larger sum, £2,840, had been given for the repair of older institutions or the building of new almshouses, for the necessary fabric of charity, but there was left a massive total of £13,608 which had been provided as capital to ensure the perpetual care of the indigent of the community. Since in average terms donors of the period seem to have assumed that £4.5s. p.a. was sufficient to ensure the full maintenance of an almsman, this would suggest that these endowments were sufficient to give full and permanent relief to about 160 almspeople, a figure considerably short of the theoretical capacity of the almshouses which Bristol possessed in 1660.

This magnificent contribution of the merchant aristocracy to the well-being and social quiet of their city must of course be assessed in relation to the even larger endowments created during the same period for the relief of the poor in their own houses. We have seen that these endowments were probably sufficient to support at least 455 poor households, or perhaps as many as 2,300 of the poor, though not the hopelessly poor. Moreover, the almshouse endowments were adequate for the full maintenance of 160 of the irrevocably poor. In all, therefore, it seems prudent to suggest that the charitable funds accumulated during our period were sufficient to lend required support to at least 12 per cent of the total population of Bristol, even though it had grown to become the second city in the realm at the close of our era. This was the achievement of a relatively small but increasingly responsible group of men who were building strong and competent social institutions within their city and who were creating a society in the image of their own secular aspirations for mankind. These merchants, bold in trade and steel-nerved in their speculations, were imbued with ideals from which the liberal society was to evolve.

2. SOCIAL REHABILITATION

Impressive as are the resources which Bristol's generosity provided to stay the erosion of poverty, it remains true that these were essentially defensive in their social significance. The great funds whose accumulation we have been tracing were dedicated to the alleviation rather than to the cure of poverty. The

boldness and the prescience of the Bristol mercantile aristocracy is even more impressively documented when we consider the comparatively large sums that were vested in experimental undertakings designed to prevent poverty and to provide the aspiring poor with means for the betterment of their condition. During the course of our period the substantial total of £9,592.1s. was disposed for these purposes, or rather more than 10 per cent of the whole of the charitable accumulations. The bold vigor of the merchant class in developing these experiments is suggested when we note that this represents a proportion from two to three times that observed in the essentially rural counties, save for Norfolk with the weighting given by Norwich, and is at least comparable to the amazingly high proportion of charitable wealth provided for this use by the burghers of London.¹⁰⁷

The interest of merchant donors in experimenting with the instrumentalities of social rehabilitation increased steadily as our period wore on. In the decades prior to the Reformation, £761.10s., or 4.52 per cent of the whole of charitable dispositions of the period, was given for this purpose, while in the brief interval of the Reformation almost 7 per cent was devoted to these undertakings. During the Elizabethan era, the considerable total of £3,248.13s. was disposed for various projects for social rehabilitation, this amounting to 11.70 per cent of all charities and in aggregate being more than ten times the sum given for religious purposes during this staggeringly secular interval. The proportion (11.46 per cent) vested in these experiments during the early Stuart period was approximately the same, while in the revolutionary decades slightly more than a fifth (20.39 per cent) of all charitable benefactions were dedicated to one or another form of social experimentation.

It should be observed that Bristol's interest in plans for social rehabilitation—for the prevention of poverty—was heavily concentrated in what were certainly the most effective instrumentalities the age had devised: apprenticeship schemes, workhouses and stocks on which the poor might be productively employed, and loan funds. Only a trifling amount was given for hospitals or specifically for the care of the sick, while the total given during our entire period for marriage subsidies—to which sentimental gentry were particularly addicted—was not more than £219.8s., or 0.24 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds gathered in the course of our period. There was a more persistent concern for the relief of prisoners, the total amount devised for this purpose being £819.13s., or slightly less than 1 per cent of all charitable funds. Most of these gifts to prisoners were relatively small, it having

¹⁰⁷ The proportions for the other counties are: Buckinghamshire, 4.45 per cent; Hampshire, 4.42 per cent; Kent, 4.78 per cent; Lancashire, 3.04 per cent; London, 13.32 per cent; Norfolk, 9.63 per cent; Somerset, 2.66 per cent; Worcestershire, 5.94 per cent; Yorkshire, 4.85 per cent.

been the custom for even very large benefactors to leave bequests of from £1 to £10 for this purpose as a kind of *addendum* to their recital of the larger charities they were creating.

The endowments for apprenticeships, on the other hand (and the whole of the total was capital) were created by relatively few but substantial benefactors. Interest in this particularly rewarding and demonstrably successful form of experimentation in social rehabilitation appeared rather late in Bristol, but the accumulations were rapid after Mayor Kitchen's initial foundation. In all, the considerable total of £1,880 was vested in apprenticeship schemes of various sorts, amounting to slightly more than 2 per cent of the whole of charitable funds. Robert Kitchen, whose carefully ordered endowments for the relief of the city's poor have already been discussed,¹⁰⁸ in his last will, proved in 1595, conveyed properties which he reckoned would yield £12 p.a. for binding out fatherless and friendless children, but when the estate was finally settled by his son in 1639, there was a higher income available, £17.10s. p.a., this being sufficient to apprentice seven poor children.¹⁰⁹ The foundation of Alice Cole in 1605, whose generous dispositions for the poor and for almshouses have already been discussed,¹¹⁰ was even more substantial, since her will provided, after a life-estate, capital of £400 for clothing and apprenticing poor boys or to support decayed craftsmen.

A prominent merchant venturer, Edward Cox, by the terms of his will, proved in 1628, in addition to vesting £4 p.a. for sermons in his parish church and £10 p.a. for the relief of the poor of Bristol, disposed property with a capital value of £200 to secure the binding of poor boys as apprentices in the city, or for the care of needy craftsmen.¹¹¹ One more example may perhaps be cited, and that too exhibits the interest of the commercial aristocracy in this fruitful form of social experimentation. The will of John Barker, a merchant and alderman, in 1636, after establishing a rent-charge on his estate of £4.6s. 8d. p.a. for sermons in his parish, conveyed considerable property to Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, as trustee, to provide an endowment of £100 to defray the cost of apprenticing two poor boys from the hospital yearly and fitting them for useful trades within the city.¹¹²

¹⁰⁸ *Vide ante*, 23.

¹⁰⁹ PCC 2 Scott 1595; *PP* 1824, 13: 484.

¹¹⁰ *Vide ante*, 24, 29.

¹¹¹ PCC 22 Barrington 1628; Egerton MS.; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 17: 27, 1951; *Adams's chronicle*, 206; *PP* 1822, 9: 532-533; *PP* 1825, 10: 388; Barrett, *Bristol*, 619.

¹¹² PCC 72 Pile 1636; *PP* 1822, 9: 467; *ibid.* 10: 268; Barrett, *Bristol*, 548-549; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 17: 40, 1951. Barker was the son of another John Barker, a merchant who in 1606 was Mayor of Bristol (*vide ante*, 25). He was an alderman and in 1617-1618, master of the Merchant Venturers. He was chosen mayor in 1625 and was a burgess in Parliament in 1628. The apprenticeship foundation was not actually made until 1658, when the settlement of the property was concluded by his son, Andrew, also a merchant and an alderman.

There was likewise considerable interest amongst the burgher aristocracy of the city in creating endowments for setting the poor at useful and productive labor. Harsh as many of these ventures may seem to modern men, they were, within the temper of the sixteenth century, not only completely charitable in intent but most hopefully designed by socially sensitive donors who were seeking to effect a cure of the blight of poverty. During our period, £1,550 was provided in Bristol for various experiments of this kind, or 1.68 per cent of the charitable whole. These outlays, the principal of which will be mentioned, were not begun until 1587 when Peter Mathew, a draper of the city, left £100 as capital to the municipal authorities to be employed by them as a stock for a house of correction "to sett the pore people in worke within the said citye."¹¹³ In 1626 a Plymouth merchant, Thomas Fownes, who was almost certainly a Bristolian by birth, also gave to the Corporation £100 to provide work for the poor.¹¹⁴ A few years later, in 1631, Cicely Gunning, probably a merchant's widow, left a capital sum in the same amount to provide work for the needy, as well as £182 for the endowment of poor relief in two parishes and the perpetual support of six poor widows.¹¹⁵

By far the largest of these benefactions was that left by Robert Aldworth, merchant and sugar refiner, whose other considerable gifts to Bristol have previously been noted.¹¹⁶ Aldworth in 1635 bequeathed £1,000 for setting the poor on work, which his executors conveyed to the city government with the understanding that it should be lent from time to time in amounts of £50 each, interest-free, for ten years, to such persons as would undertake to put the poor on useful and remunerative employment.¹¹⁷ Shortly before this great benefaction was made, another Bristol merchant, George White, a brother of the Rev. Thomas White, in addition to bestowing £100 for the relief of prisoners, £100 for the poor, £25 for sermons, and other substantial bequests which will be treated later,¹¹⁸ left a fund of £100 to the city authorities, the income

¹¹³ PCC 64 Spencer 1587; Egerton MS.; Wadley, *Wills*, 253; *PP* 1823, 8: 612. Mathew also left £20 to the poor of Stratford, Wiltshire, more than £1,000 to his surviving family, and £20 to "Mistress Garrett [a hooper's widow] whoe was sometimes my mistris."

¹¹⁴ PCC 84 Lee 1638; *PP* 1821, 12: 240; *PP* 1823, 8: 612; *PP* 1837-38, 26: 622. Fownes, who also made substantial charitable distributions in Devon, was probably the son of John Fownes, a Bristol merchant who served as sheriff in 1601 (PCC 94 Dorset 1609).

¹¹⁵ PCC 13 Audley 1632; *PP* 1824, 13: 522. She was probably the widow of John Gunning, a member of the Spanish Company and of the Merchant Venturers, who was Mayor of Bristol in 1627.

¹¹⁶ *Vide ante*, 24.

¹¹⁷ This scheme to aid in the social rehabilitation of the able-bodied poor had been tried elsewhere in the realm, usually without enduring success.

¹¹⁸ *Vide post*, 33, 35.

of which was to be employed in providing useful work for the poor.¹¹⁹

These were the principal among the bequests which had by 1640 endowed Bristol with £1,550 of free capital with which to give some honest work to the deserving unemployed and to try to separate them from the malingeringers and the unemployable. But there was far greater enthusiasm amongst the merchants of the city in constituting really substantial loan funds with which poor boys, who were just setting up in a trade or craft, might be guided over the reefs of poverty as they were embarking on the competitive trade of the era. These capital sums began accumulating as early as 1532, being rapidly augmented during the Elizabethan age, when £2,575 was given for this purpose, and continuing to grow until the closing years of our period. In total, the large sum of £5,118 was provided for this laudable purpose, this being somewhat more than 5 per cent of all charities and amounting to well over half of all the benefactions made for purposes of social rehabilitation.

The earliest of these loan funds was created in 1532 under the will of the great merchant, Robert Thorne,¹²⁰ who bequeathed £500 to the city "for the succor of young men minded to clothmaking," provided such a recipient "wulde bynde himselfe and geue suertie and make indede most clothe shall enjoye moost money without paying any intresses," all such loans to be payable after one year. Thorne's younger brother, Nicholas, a merchant and Mayor of Bristol, on his death in 1546, left £400, of which he declared half to be the gift of a fellow merchant, Thomas Howell,¹²¹ for the same general purposes and for the encouragement of young men taking up the cloth trade.¹²²

Nicholas Thorne referred in his will to a great benefaction made in the preceding year by the eminent London merchant, Sir Thomas White, the founder of St. John's College and a founder of the Merchant Taylors School in London. White had in 1545 given to the city of Bristol £2,000, in lands in Gloucestershire and Somerset, for general charitable uses, the income

¹¹⁹ PCC 88 Seager 1634; Egerton MS.; 1822, 9: 486, 529-530; *ibid.* 10: 265; PP 1823, 8: 589; *Adams's chronicle*, 212. White was a member of the Spanish Company and of the Merchant Venturers. Thomas White left his brother an annuity of £ 40 for life, with the provision that it should then be added to the endowment of the Temple Almshouse.

¹²⁰ *Vide ante*, 19, 22, 27, and *post*, 37, 42, 43.

¹²¹ PCC 24 Alen 1546. Howell had died in Spain in the same year. *Vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 184, 375, for an account of Howell's charities.

¹²² PCC 18 Alen 1546; Wadley, *Wills*, 184-187; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 241; Barrett, *Bristol*, 614. His epitaph is in Davis, C. T., *Monumental brasses of Gloucestershire*, 167, London, 1899. Thorne, who had been Mayor of Bristol and who had represented his city in Parliament, left in all £ 866.6s. to various charities. He bequeathed £ 113 to the poor of the city, £ 57 for the endowment and £ 36 for the repair of the school founded by his brother, £ 25 for needed work on the harbor, £ 30 for the amendment of roads and streets, and £ 66.13s.4d. for marriage portions, among other bequests.

to be disposed in loans to poor young clothiers of the city upon satisfactory surety. In 1566 White regulated the benefaction by trust, naming twenty-four towns, Bristol being one, which should in successive years receive the income of £104, of which £100 was to be lent free of interest for ten years to two young clothiers of honest fame. Bristol was accordingly at once trustee and a recipient of the fund, which suffered somewhat from the overly sagacious complications with which White was wont to surround his great benefactions.¹²³

Passing to gifts for this same laudable purpose a generation later, we should mention an uncomplicated loan fund established in 1625 by the will of still another London merchant, John Dunster, who left £100 to be lent to worthy craftsmen starting on their trades.¹²⁴ A few years later, in 1630, Robert Redwood, the founder of Bristol's public library,¹²⁵ in addition to a bequest of £20 for the relief of the poor, left £200 to the municipal authorities to be lent out without interest in sums not to exceed £10 and for not longer than five years.¹²⁶ Just a year earlier, John Whitson, whose large benefactions for Bristol's poor have been noted,¹²⁷ left £500 in loan funds to the city, the capital to be divided into two equal amounts, the one for loans to five young merchants "of honest name and fame" at 1 per cent interest per annum, the income to be distributed to the poor, and the remaining half to be lent to twenty poor tradesmen or craftsmen, on sufficient surety, with no interest.¹²⁸ A few years later, George White, who had also provided a stock for putting the poor on work, established by his will, proved in 1634, a fund of £200 to be lent without interest to needy and deserving young clothiers,¹²⁹ while in the same generation Thomas Jones endowed a fund of £380 which the city authorities were to lend at their discretion to needy and deserving young men.¹³⁰

When we bear in mind that from £20 to £50 was regarded by these donors as quite sufficient capital for a man to set himself up as a clothier or merchant and that £10 was generally regarded as adequate capital for a craftsman opening his trade, the total of upwards

¹²³ PCC 36 Stonarde 1567; Clode, C. M., *Early history of the Merchant Taylors* 2: 178, London, 1888; PP 1823, 8: 586-590; *A concise history of Worcester*, 175-176, Worcester, 1829. *Vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 174, 215, 257-258, 370, for a discussion of White's charities.

¹²⁴ PCC 147 Clark 1625; PP 1823, 8: 599. Dunster also left large bequests to charities in Somerset and London.

¹²⁵ *Vide post*, 39.

¹²⁶ PCC 65 Scroope 1630; PP 1823, 8: 600; Barrett, *Bristol*, 507; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 51: 117, 1929; *Harleian Society Publications* 21: 199, 1885; *Adams's chronicle*, 201. Redwood was adjudged "no gentleman" in the Gloucestershire visitation of 1623. His first wife was the widow of John Carr. His occupation is unknown.

¹²⁷ *Vide ante*, 23, 30.

¹²⁸ PP 1822, 9: 488-490.

¹²⁹ *Vide ante*, 32.

¹³⁰ PP 1823, 8: 599-600.

of £5,000 available for such loans appears most generous indeed. It is difficult to believe that any young man, however poor, who had been apprenticed and who enjoyed a good name could not have qualified for aid from one or another of the numerous loan funds with which the city was favored by the close of our period. An instrumentality had thus been framed which possessed great social virtue, and it was one which those responsible administered with steady prudence and impressive skill. Bristol was truly a city providing most generous opportunity as it reaped the fruit of the accumulating benefactions of its merchant leaders.

3. MUNICIPAL BETTERMENTS

Bristol's social and cultural maturity is further suggested by the continuous and certainly generous concern of its merchant aristocracy with the improvement of various municipal institutions, not only by the effective use of taxation but by well-considered charitable benefactions. During the whole of our period, the substantial total of £8,378.5s. was contributed for one or another municipal use, this amounting to somewhat more than 9 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds. Even in the early decades of our study, a total of £859.7s., representing 5.11 per cent of all charities of these generations, was given for various municipal uses. In the interval of the Reformation, nearly a quarter (23.29 per cent) of all benefactions were designated for such purposes, this being likewise the period in which the Corporation was to gain growing space for the city by the timely purchase of the encircling monastic properties which had so recently been expropriated. During the Elizabethan era, the large total of £3,254.4s. was given for the several municipal purposes, or almost 12 per cent of all charitable funds provided during these years. The relative interest of Bristol's merchants in these essentially civic outlays declined sharply during the early Stuart decades, when the total of £2,324.16s. represented not more than 6.88 per cent of all benefactions, and it all but withered during the years of revolution when political and civic disquiet bore heavily indeed on men who were no longer quite certain of the future of their city or of their age.

We have included a variety of these benefactions under the general head of gifts to the municipality for its general uses, the more substantial of which may at least be briefly noted. Benefactions of this sort were made steadily throughout our period and reached the considerable total of £3,955, or 4.30 per cent of all charitable funds. In all, Bristol donors provided £629 for such purposes during the years prior to the Reformation, while they gave almost twice as much, £1,220, during the brief period when the course of reform was in progress. The large sum of £1,857 was given during the Elizabethan age for a wide range of municipal betterments, while benefactions of this

kind fell away very rapidly during the early Stuart period, when a total of only £187 was given, and all but disappeared during the two decades of political unsettlement.

The earliest of the substantial benefactions for municipal uses was that made in 1532 under the will of the merchant prince, Robert Thorne, certain of whose lavish charities for his native city have already been discussed.¹⁸¹ Thorne gave the sum of £200 to be employed for the redemption of the fee farm and other imposts as an assistance to the expanding trade of the city, as well as £100 for the building of a merchants' exchange in an appropriate street to be selected by his executors. His will further provided the considerable capital of £300 to be used by the municipal authorities for the stabilization of grain prices, "to the entent that yerely may be made p'vision of corne and wudde for the succour of the pore com'ons," the grain to be purchased in periods of plenty and to be distributed at the purchase price in times of scarcity, "so that always the said ccc poundes do contynue."¹⁸²

Just a decade later, in 1541, another great merchant, Thomas White,¹⁸³ conveyed to the city extensive lands in Gloucestershire, valued at approximately £620, with the provision that £11 p.a. of the income should be employed by the municipal authorities to secure the exemption of Severn vessels from the imposition of tolls, custom charges, and wharfage fees on all goods loaded at the port of Bristol. The continuing concern of Bristol merchants with the task of freeing the city from a variety of tolls and other customary charges on commerce was demonstrated in numerous bequests of this period, of which a legacy of £100 made by Thomas Hart in 1541 to be used to release the city gates from all tolls may be regarded as typical.¹⁸⁴ A few years later Thomas White's close friend, Nicholas Thorne, by will gave £80 for building a granary in which the corn purchased with Robert Thorne's capital might be safely stored, as well as setting aside £20 for the repair of banks enclosing marsh lands lying near Bristol, £25 for the construction of a dock for the repair of vessels in the port of Bristol, and thirty tons of salt, with a value of perhaps £50, for the repair of roads, conduits, and the pump in St. Peter's parish.¹⁸⁵

Sir Thomas White, whose generosity to Bristol has already been discussed,¹⁸⁶ gave funds amounting to £300 for general municipal uses early in the Elizabethan period, while numerous smaller donors provided sums for a variety of useful purposes ranging from civic plate to the repair of public buildings. More substantial was the gift of William Tucker, a draper, who was mayor in

¹⁸¹ *Vide ante*, 19, 22, 27, 33, and *post*, 37, 42, 43.

¹⁸² *Vide ante*, 22.

¹⁸³ *Vide ante*, 27.

¹⁸⁴ Wadley, *Wills*, 179; Barrett, *Bristol*, 613.

¹⁸⁵ *Vide ante*, 33.

¹⁸⁶ *Vide ante*, 33.

1570, when he secured land in St. Thomas Street for the building there of a public market.¹³⁷ The market rights were purchased from the Queen by an apothecary, Michael Sowdley, in the same year and a market place built, which was covered with lead and "supported by pillars of free stone." In all, something like £400 had been expended in establishing this valued place of exchange where each week a free market was provided for wool, yarn, cattle, and victuals.

These are but principal examples of numerous large and useful benefactions made by Bristol merchants for the enhancement and betterment of their city. These men were members of a community which possessed a remarkably alert civic consciousness and which could and did move energetically when improvements were required. Thus, in the period 1628-1634 the city in successive stages purchased from the Crown and a leaseholder Bristol Castle and the surrounding grounds at a total charge of £1,479.¹³⁸ This purchase was principally financed from public funds and is accordingly not reckoned as a charitable benefaction, but it does exemplify most perfectly the fashion in which private and public policy were joined in Bristol to secure the ends held in view by the mercantile aristocracy. These men were proud of their city, a pride perhaps most munificently displayed in 1634 by the bequest of George White, whose charities have already been noted, who left £150 to provide gold chains with which the mayor might be more appropriately adorned.¹³⁹

Even greater interest was evinced by Bristol's merchants and tradesmen in the improvement of the city's communications and its public services. During the whole of our period, the large sum of £4,349.18s., or 4.73 per cent of all charitable contributions, was given for the maintenance of streets and roads, for the repair of causeways, the improvement of water supply, and similar public works. In the decades prior to the Reformation, concern with these services was at once mild and desultory, the total of £229.7s. having been provided. During the short interval of the Reformation when, as has been observed, there was a burgeoning of generosity to all civic causes, £625.5s. was supplied for these worthy purposes, while in the Elizabethan age the total of such benefactions rose steeply to £1,393.10s. The amount given for such improvements increased to the large sum of £2,091.16s. during the early Stuart period, and then fell away to a trifling sum during the years of revolutionary disturbance.

At least a small bequest for the repair of roads and streets was by no means uncommon in merchants' wills

¹³⁷ PCC 14 Butts 1583; *PP* 1824, 13: 418-419; Barrett, *Bristol*, 565; *Adam's chronicle*, 112. Tucker, who did not die until 1583, also left an annual stipend of £2 for poor relief, £2 p.a. for church repairs, and 7s. p.a. for sermons.

¹³⁸ Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 288; *Adam's chronicle*, 239; Barrett, *Bristol*, 223-224.

¹³⁹ *Vide ante*, 32, 33.

well before the Reformation. Thus in 1526 Robert Thorne, the elder, left £10 for the repair of roads, as well as benefactions for prayers, almshouses, the poor, and the Church.¹⁴⁰ His son, the great merchant who bore the same name, in 1532 left £100 to secure the repair of the highway "from Co'mer Marsh to Bristol" and as much to put in better repair all highways entering the city.¹⁴¹ At the same time, humbler men were making their more modest contributions to improving the communications on which Bristol's commercial development depended, as is suggested by the bequest in 1535 of £5 for the repair of highways and £2 for the mending of a causeway by David Hutton, a tradesman.¹⁴²

But, as was the case with all charitable causes in Bristol, it was the great merchants who led the way. Thus, Thomas White, the mayor and merchant, certain of whose benefactions have already been noted,¹⁴³ in 1542 provided an annuity of £4 for the maintenance of water conduits supplying two parishes of the city. Still another merchant and mayor of this period, William Pykes, in 1550 left £20 to extend the water conduits to St. Thomas's parish and provided £50 for the needed repair of roads and streets.¹⁴⁴

There was likewise a steady interest in causeways, most of which were built and maintained by private charity through the course of our period. Thus in 1564 a grocer, James Dowle, left £10 for this use.¹⁴⁵ In the same decade John Willis, a merchant and a chamberlain of the city, "the best chamberlain that ever was in Bristol," spent an estimated £1,100 of his own fortune in building seven miles of causeway around Bristol. Willis, who died in 1569, exhausted his estate on this great undertaking, living out his last days in what amounted to an honorable sinecure.¹⁴⁶

The private outlays on streets, roads, conduits, and similar improvements were continuous and heavy from 1561 to 1610. William Carr, who had also made generous provisions for almshouses and for poor relief, in 1579 left £25 outright for the repair of roads within a radius of fifteen miles of the city.¹⁴⁷ Thomas Kelke, another merchant, in 1583 by will provided £20 for the repair of roads and conduits,¹⁴⁸ while a brewer, John Griffin, a few years later left £5 for the repair of causeways and property valued at £120, the income of which was to be used to keep Temple Conduit in repair.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁰ Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 2: 163.

¹⁴¹ *Vide ante*, 22.

¹⁴² PCC 30 Hogen 1535. Hutton also left £20 for poor relief and £1 to the clergy.

¹⁴³ *Vide ante*, 27.

¹⁴⁴ *Vide ante*, 27.

¹⁴⁵ PCC 10 Morrison 1564; Barrett, *Bristol*, 614.

¹⁴⁶ *Adam's chronicle*, 110; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 12: 12, 1946; *ibid.* 14: 137, 174, 1948.

¹⁴⁷ Wadley, *Wills*, 207-209; Barrett, *Bristol*, 615; *PP* 1823, 8: 607-608. Carr, a merchant, had been Mayor of Bristol and had represented the city in Parliament.

¹⁴⁸ *Vide ante*, 22.

¹⁴⁹ PCC 37 Spencer 1587; *PP* 1823, 8: 612. Griffin bequeathed properties with a capital value of £220 for poor re-

A mercer and a former mayor, Richard Cole, at the close of the century, among other substantial bequests, left £30 for the repair of roads.¹⁵⁰

The intimate and direct responsibility which the merchant aristocracy of Bristol assumed for the needs of the city is well illustrated in the financing in 1601 of a conduit which supplied the quay. The total cost of the improvement was in the neighborhood of £66.13s.4d., of which a merchant, John Barker, supplied £25; the executors of the estate of Robert Kitchen, whose several philanthropies have been noted, advanced £10; the parish officers of St. Stephen's £10 out of the church stock; and two merchants a ton of lead; while the remainder of the charges were borne by the Chamber of the city.¹⁵¹ Still another merchant, John Fownes, in 1609 left to the city a capital sum of one hundred marks, the income of which was to be employed for the better cleaning and sweeping of certain streets.¹⁵² These slow but steady accumulations prompted by civic pride and a sense of responsibility for the physical amenities and improvements of the city were richly increased in 1624 under the will of Thomas White of London, whom we have seen to be one of Bristol's great benefactors, he having left the very large sum of £2,000 to secure the repair and maintenance of roads and streets in and about the city.¹⁵³ These men, merchants of Bristol—and even the London clergyman, Thomas White, was a member of a merchant family—had built well and truly. They had fashioned with their generosity not only the abiding institutions of the city but its physical shape and its amenities as well.

4. EDUCATION

The burghers of Bristol were likewise deeply interested in founding a system of popular education. This by the close of our period had been so well endowed and ordered that few communities in the realm could rival the city in the educational opportunities afforded children of whatever social rank. It is clear that most of the generous benefactions made for education were regarded as investments in the social rehabilitation of youth, in the prevention of poverty, and in the arming of young people with the skills and knowledge required by a new age and a more harshly competitive economy. In total, the very large sum of £19,635.7s. was provided by relatively few donors for the foundation and endowment of Bristol's educational institutions. This amount, almost all being capital, represented somewhat more than one-fifth (21.33 per cent), as well as a small bequest for the clergy. Temple Conduit had been built in 1561.

¹⁵⁰ *Vide ante*, 29, and *post*, 38.

¹⁵¹ *Adams's chronicle*, 159. Barker (PCC 82 Hudleston 1607) was a member of the Spanish Company and of the Merchant Venturers. He was mayor in 1606, dying in the next year.

¹⁵² PCC 94 Dorset 1609; Barrett, *Bristol*, 617; Egerton MS.

¹⁵³ *Vide ante*, 29-30.

cent) of the whole of Bristol's charitable endowments and greatly exceeded the total given for all religious purposes and slightly exceeded the combined sums provided for municipal improvements and for the various experiments in social rehabilitation. The great outpouring for educational purposes came in the Elizabethan era, when the impressive sum of £12,651.7s. was given for one or another educational need of the community, amounting to nearly half (45.56 per cent) the funds given or bequeathed in these years for all other charitable causes.

The central concern of these donors was with the endowment and enlargement of the school facilities available to the children of the city. The great total of £18,559.7s. was vested in school foundations during our period, and almost the whole of this was given within the century extending from 1531 to 1630. Bristol's interest in education was keen, but it was likewise intensely parochial, for during our long age only a trivial total has been recorded of gifts to the universities, while the relatively small sum of £473 was provided as capital for university or other scholarships.

The intensity of this concern with the creation of a system of local education was doubtless in part inspired by the fact that there were few resources indeed surviving from the Middle Ages. There is no certain evidence that any of the numerous chantry foundations existing at the beginning of our period provided systematic teaching or that any of the monastic foundations which ringed the city undertook any responsibility for lay instruction. There had been, it seems quite certain, a substantial medieval grammar school of early foundation, which in 1318 was supported by a guild or brotherhood of clergy and laity, "for teaching Jews and other little ones" under the protection of the Mayor of Bristol.¹⁵⁴ The subsequent medieval history of this school, which for a time at least fell under monastic control, is by no means clear. But it is evident that it was situated at Frome Gate in 1493, where it was to remain until it was re-founded or, perhaps more accurately, supplanted, by Thorne's foundation made just prior to the Reformation.

The foundation of Bristol Grammar School was the great contribution of the Thorne family, certainly the most eminent of all the city's mercantile elite. The original conception seems to have been in the mind of the elder Robert Thorne, the founder of the line, who in his will enjoined his executors to sell his goods and to devote the proceeds to those good works for which they saw the greatest need.¹⁵⁵ But the foundation was delayed until after the death of his greater and richer son of the same name. Shortly before his death at the age of forty, the younger Thorne had gained letters patent from the Crown, with other

¹⁵⁴ *VCH, Gloucs.* 2: 356.

¹⁵⁵ *Vide ante*, 22.

trustees, for the establishment and endowment of a grammar school, in which boys might be instructed in good manners and letters, and permitting the trustees to acquire the premises of St. Bartholomew's Hospital, which enjoyed the protection of Lord de la Warre, who also appears as one of the school's founders. Lands and other properties with a then capital value of about £1,000 were purchased by Robert Thorne and his brother, Nicholas, and were conveyed to the municipality of Bristol "for the erection establishment and contynuance of a free gramer schole" with a schoolmaster and one or two ushers. Thorne bequeathed £25 to Thomas Moffatt, the schoolmaster, and £300 towards the further endowment of the school, as well as debts of an uncertain value owed to him by the hapless Lord de la Warre.¹⁵⁶

The task of completing the endowment of the grammar school was left to Robert Thorne's younger brother, Nicholas, himself a merchant and in 1544 the Mayor of Bristol. Nicholas Thorne established the school in St. Bartholomew's shortly before 1540. He had not, however, concluded the conveyance of the landed estates of St. Bartholomew's to the city before his death in 1546. His will provided a total of £57 for the additional endowment of the school, £36.13s.4d. for the repair of the premises, as well as "all such booke as may be meete" and his maps and astronomical instruments for the school library. The completion of the conveyance of the St. Bartholomew properties was again delayed, because of family claims against the estate, and it was not concluded until 1561, when the Corporation of Bristol greatly weakened the ultimate value of the endowment by exchanging title to the properties for a perpetual rent-charge in the amount of £30 p.a.¹⁵⁷ At about the same time, Dr. George Owen, the London physician who had so richly endowed Foster's almshouse, bequeathed property with a capital value of £80 towards the further endowment of the institution.¹⁵⁸ The income available for the trust not being sufficient at the beginning of the seventeenth century adequately to pay the master and usher, an annual grant of £5 was made by the city and an equal amount was provided by the executors of Robert Kitchen in order to establish stipends at £20

¹⁵⁶ PCC 18 Thower 1532; *PP* 1823, 8: 597; *DNB*; Fuller, *Worthies* 3: 119; Barrett, *Bristol*, 613; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 233. Thorne was buried in St. Christopher le Stocks, London, where his epitaph records his foundation (Stow, John, *The Survey of London* 1, bk. 2: 123, London, 1720):

Robertus cubat hic	Londinium hoc Tumulo
Thornus Mercator honestus	clauerat ante diem.
Qui sibi legitimas	Ornavit studiis
Arte paravit opes.	patriam virtutibus auxit,
Huic vitam dederat	Gymnasium erexit
puero Bristolia quondam,	sumptibus ipse suis . . .

Vide ante, 19, 22, 27, 33, and *post*, 42, 43, for further notice of the Thorne charities.

¹⁵⁷ *Vide ante*, 26.

¹⁵⁸ *Vide ante*, 27.

p.a. and £10 p.a. respectively. Furthermore, proceedings were begun in Chancery in 1608 against Alice Pykes, the surviving daughter of Nicholas Thorne, alleging that the agreement reached in 1561 was improper and forcing a new settlement, under which the Thorne estate was ordered to pay £41.6s.8d. of assured annual rental as well as a small sum for repairs. A few years later, the remaining Bartholomew properties were purchased by the city from Alice Pykes for £650 and the long altercation closed. The resources of the school were strengthened in 1626 when George Nethway left £50 for the augmentation of salaries and Richard Wickham £68 for further endowments, while in 1634 William Burns bequeathed £10 for the purchase of additional books for the library. The income had risen to £85 p.a. in 1634, and the stipends of the master and usher had been settled at levels calculated to attract excellent teachers.

The second great foundation was that made in 1586 under the will of John Carr, a merchant and soap manufacturer who had acquired great wealth from a secret process in the making of his wares. Carr left his whole fortune, after establishing a trust of £50 p.a. for a surviving sister, for the founding in Bristol of a hospital on the model of "Christ's hospital nigh St. Bartholomew's in London." The foundation, to be known as Queen Elizabeth's Hospital, was to be made by his executors after a space of five years, during which the income should be used to extinguish the testator's debts and other obligations. The will then settled on the foundation the manor of Congresbury, Somerset, for the reversion of which Carr had in 1562 paid £3,500, and other valuable properties subject to life interests totaling £100 p.a. The trustees were enjoined to establish an institution for the care and education of poor and orphaned boys, who should be natives of Bristol or of Congresbury. The trustees compounded with Edward Carr, a brother of the founder, for £5,000 to extinguish certain debts and other claims on the estate and, having secured a royal charter in 1590, opened the school in 1597. Boys were admitted, at the age of seven, on nomination of the civic authorities, and were given complete care as well as instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. The foundation was placed on the premises of Gaunt's Hospital, lately acquired by the Corporation from the Crown. It is not possible accurately to estimate the value of Carr's great gift, but the premises were later assessed at £3,000, and it seems probable that the value of the endowments accruing ultimately from Carr's estate was of the order of £5,400.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁹ PCC 32 Windsor 1586; Egerton MS.; *PP* 1822, 9: 463-467; Barrett, *Bristol*, 616; Barker, W. R., *St. Mark's*, 75, Bristol, 1892. Carr was the son of a Bristol merchant and alderman. He represented Bristol in Parliament in 1559 and 1567. The tangled history of the legal proceedings is fully set out in the petition of the city to Lord Burghley for the settling of the foundation of the school (British Museum, Lansdowne Manuscripts 61: 74).

The foundation enjoyed the warm support of other members of the merchant aristocracy, and its already large endowment was quickly and generously augmented. William Bird, a merchant friend of Carr, was particularly assiduous in helping to secure the full execution of the founder's will. In 1589, while mayor, Bird gave £530 towards the capital of the school, as well as canceling an advance of £50 which he had previously made. He likewise obtained from the Corporation as a gift to the school a small impost on lead, iron, and raisins landed in Bristol port for a period of eight years.¹⁶⁰ Somewhat earlier, another merchant, Anthony Standback, by will left properties valued at £510 for the use of his wife for her lifetime, and then to the hospital, naming Bird as his executor.¹⁶¹ In 1599 Richard Cole, likewise a former mayor of the city, left properties with a capital worth of £180, with a reversionary interest to the school, only a small portion of which seems to have fallen in to the trustees.¹⁶²

Lady Mary Ramsay, whose generosity to her native city we have had earlier occasion to note,¹⁶³ by her will proved in 1601 greatly augmented the endowment of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital with a bequest of £1,000, while the widow of a Bristol merchant, Ann Colston, bequeathed £200 to the city authorities three years later, to be used in part to secure an addition of £4 p.a. to its revenues.¹⁶⁴ There were other smaller augmentations to the funds of this deservedly popular institution, but we shall be content with recording the two remaining substantial bequests made during our period. In 1636 John Barker, a merchant and Mayor of Bristol, in addition to a rent-charge of £4.6s.8d. p.a. left for sermons, bequeathed £100 as well as six messuages valued at £240 to be employed as capital for fitting boys on the foundation for useful trades within the city of Bristol.¹⁶⁵ The final bequest was made in 1659 by an aged and most stubborn merchant and former mayor, Humphrey Hooke, who left to the city the sum of £680 which it owed him, with an instruction that bread and coal be provided weekly for the poor of St. Stephen's parish and the remaining capital, valued at about £480, be employed for the support of Queen Elizabeth's Hospital.¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁰ PCC 71 Drury 1590; Egerton MS.; *Adams's chronicle*, 113, 114, 138; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 263; Barrett, *Bristol*, 616; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 15: 79-80, 1890-1891. Bird, the grandson of a merchant and mayor of the city, was a draper by trade. He was sheriff in 1573 and mayor in 1589. Three boys in the school were called "Bird's Boys" and wore badges marked "W.B."

¹⁶¹ PCC 35 Spencer 1587; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 616; Wadley, *Wills*, 256-257; *PP* 1822, 9: 466. Standbank was sheriff in 1552, mayor in 1564.

¹⁶² *Vide ante*, 29, 36.

¹⁶³ *Vide ante*, 23.

¹⁶⁴ *Vide ante*, 23 note, 29.

¹⁶⁵ *Vide ante*, 32.

¹⁶⁶ PCC 201 Pell 1659; *New-England Hist. and Gen. Reg.* 54: 410-413, 1900; *PP* 1822, 9: 536; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 6:

The structure of education in Bristol was completed in 1627 when the great merchant, John Whitson, by will settled certain educational benefits from property which for the most part had been devised to trustees for charitable purposes seven years earlier. He provided that rents of £8.10s.6d. p.a. be employed for the better maintenance of the master of the grammar school, who should endeavor to advance poor freemen's sons in the mastery of the English and Latin tongues. Whitson likewise vested rents of £10 p.a. to secure the augmentation of the schoolmaster's salary at Newland, Gloucestershire, his birthplace. But his charitable interest was principally centered on his own foundation, the Red Maids' School, which was opened in 1634. His will charged his manor of Burnett (Somerset) with an annuity of £90, or a capital worth of £1,800, to be paid to the civic authorities, who should in turn provide an appropriate building for a man and wife of "good life and conversation" to administer his foundation. The premises should be furnished to care for forty poor girls, daughters of dead or decayed freemen and burgesses of the city. Under the supervision of the mayor's wife or the wife of one alderman, the students were to be taught to read English, to sew, and to learn other skills by which they might later maintain themselves. The girls admitted were to be attired in a distinctive red dress with a white apron, to attend as a body sermons on the Sabbath and festival days, and on the completion of their education should be bound out to "grave, painful, and modest" mistresses. There being a surplus of funds from this extraordinarily generous endowment, it was arranged in 1634, with the consent of Whitson's widow, that from £10 p.a. to £20 p.a. of the income should be employed for marriage portions for former students of the institution. The school was well managed from its beginning and in 1658 was moved to larger and more appropriate quarters built with surplus income from Whitson's great trust.¹⁶⁷

These notable educational institutions, then, had been created in Bristol during the course of our period,

248-250, 1935. Hooke, who was seventy-nine years of age at the time of his death, was a native of Chichester, Sussex. He was a member and later (1621, 1630-1635) master of the Merchant Venturers, and he was successively councillor, alderman, and mayor of Bristol. He was expelled from the House of Commons, where he was a burgess for Bristol, in 1642 for having been involved in a "project for wines" contrary to the orders of the House. He complained in 1646 that his estates had been unjustly sequestrated on charges of delinquency, but was an avowed Royalist when for a brief period the city was taken by the King's forces. Hooke was heavily fined when Fairfax re-took Bristol, but once more protested his loyalty to Parliament and subscribed to the National Covenant. He was a very rich man, leaving £5,133 in personal bequests, as well as several manors in Somerset and Gloucestershire of uncertain value. One of his sons, William Hooke, was a venturer in America, and a son-in-law, Giles Elbridge, was a patentee of the Pemaquid (Maine) colony.

¹⁶⁷ *Vide ante*, 23, 30, 33.

offering immensely important advantages to its youth.¹⁶⁸ It is remarkable that all these foundations were made and all the substantial augmentations were derived from a very small group of rich merchants, most of whom had in fact been mayors of the city. They were men with a clear understanding of the fact that ignorance and want of skill had first to be relieved before any able child could meet the requirements of the commercial and industrial society which these men were themselves raising up. They were certainly high-minded men with noble aspirations for the community so beloved by them, but they were likewise men of great practicality who correctly analyzed the main currents of a new age.

But generous and devoted as these benefactors were to the educational needs of their community, they had but scant concern for the extension of educational opportunities beyond their own city. Their contributions to the universities, as has been said, totaled no more than £3 through the whole of our period, while the endowment of scholarships, even for Bristol boys, was extraordinarily meager. In 1626 Ann Snigge, the daughter of Sir George Snigge, a Baron of the Exchequer, left £200 in trust to executors who vested the amount in the municipal authorities on condition that they pay £6 p.a. to two scholars, being graduates of the free grammar school, to permit them to complete their education in the universities.¹⁶⁹ A few years later, in 1634, an annuity of £20 p.a. was set aside from Whitson's great charitable fund, with the approval of his widow, establishing two scholarships of £10 p.a. each for two poor boys of the city who should likewise be graduates of the grammar school.¹⁷⁰ And, finally, in the next year a merchant, George White, left by will a fund of £100 to provide a scholarship of £5 p.a. for the preferment and support in the university of a poor boy who might be a graduate of any school in the city.¹⁷¹

The structure of education in Bristol was completed by the foundation in 1614 of a public library, which, after Norwich, was the oldest such institution in the realm. We have noted that as early as 1546 Nicholas Thorne had left a considerable collection of books, maps, and instruments to constitute the library of the grammar school, to which several later donors made gifts, but there is no reason for believing that this was open for public use. But in 1614 Robert Redwood, who, though he had married the widow of John Carr, was "disclaimed no gentleman," gave a suitable building and some land, with an approximate value of £200,

¹⁶⁸ We are disregarding the formal foundation in 1538, in conjunction with the establishment of the See of Bristol (1542), of a school on the endowment of the See. It was in any case not a private charitable foundation, but there is no certain evidence that it was ever more than a somewhat neglected choristers' school during the whole course of our period.

¹⁶⁹ PCC 78 Hele 1626; *PP* 1822, 9: 487.

¹⁷⁰ *Vide ante*, 23, 30, 33, 38.

¹⁷¹ *Vide ante*, 32.

for use as a public library, with the stipulation that the vicar of St. Leonard's should be librarian, provided he was a graduate of a university and stood approved by the mayor and aldermen.¹⁷² Somewhat later, Tobias Matthew, Archbishop of York, and a native of Bristol, gave a large collection of old books to the library, which had with other gifts come to number about five hundred volumes by 1630.¹⁷³

5. RELIGION

The religious institutions of Bristol were mature and all but complete at the beginning of our period. From the very early Middle Ages the town had been incorporated in the great bishopric of Worcester, not being constituted as a See until 1542 when the Augustine church was made a cathedral and quite inadequate endowments provided for this new Henrician bishopric. The city was the center for a number of strongly entrenched monastic foundations, with which it got on rather badly and whose holdings, following the Expropriation, were quickly absorbed by the municipality, by individual charitable trusts, and by private speculators. During most of our period the city was divided into seventeen parishes, and as a result of much fourteenth- and fifteenth-century building, the church fabric of the community was reasonably complete at the outset of our age. Lutheran heresies found early support in Bristol, and there is abundant evidence of a strong and tenacious Puritan party there from the time of Hooper's episcopate (1551-1553) forward, though these more radical religious views seem to have enjoyed but scant support from the dominant mercantile aristocracy through the entire course of the sixteenth century. A conventicle was formed in the Laudian period, again with little support from the merchant class, while a strong and notable Baptist community was constituted in 1640, drawing its adherents principally from the ranks of the artisans and tradesmen. The religious complexion of the city did not, then, differ significantly from that of other English port towns, and one has the impression that the dominant commercial elite was struggling desperately to keep the city from becoming embroiled in the unsettling religious controversies of the seventeenth century. The mercantile elite was cleanly and quite evenly divided during the early months of the Civil War, most of its members, as our biographical notes have suggested, appearing to have been animated far more by the cool persuasions of prudence than by zealous counsels of conviction as they contemplated the events which dealt so severely with the economy and society of Bristol.

Our own evidence lends substantial documentation

¹⁷² PCC 65 Scroope 1630; Egerton MS.; Barrett, *Bristol*, 507; *Harleian Soc.* 21: 199, 1885; Little, *Bristol*, 119. *Vide ante*, 33.

¹⁷³ *DNB*; Egerton MS.; *Adams's chronicle*, 201; Barrett, *Bristol*, 508. We have quite uncertainly valued the collection for statistical purposes at £ 250.

to the view that Bristol was in point of fact possibly the most secular community in the realm and that secularism in its turn bred the invincible indifference which is the negative spiritual consequence in any society torn by rival religious extremisms. We have sought to follow closely the implacable spread of secularism in sixteenth-century England; in no part of the realm is this quiet but nonetheless revolutionary metamorphosis in men's thought and aspirations more clearly revealed than in Bristol. During the whole course of our period, Bristol's donors gave a total of £12,130.3s. for various religious purposes, amounting to 13.18 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds amassed during an interval of not quite two centuries. This proportion is substantially less than the amount devoted to education, not much more than 28 per cent of the total given to the needs of the poor, and incredibly, not impressively more than the sums provided for such purposes as municipal betterments and the various experiments in social rehabilitation. Not only did Bristol give proportionately less for religious uses than any other county in England, but it gave substantially less even than London, where nearly one-fifth of all benefactions were for religious purposes.¹⁷⁴

But even this analysis grossly overstates Bristol's concern with religious needs, if we take in view the curve of benefactions for religious purposes. During the decades just prior to the Reformation, a total of £8,011.4s. was given for religious causes, this amounting to something less than half (47.59 per cent) of all benefactions for the period. Substantial though this amount is, it nonetheless represents a proportion considerably less than that we have observed for this medieval interval in other counties. For Bristol, however, these gifts of pious men in the period prior to the advent of the Reformation represent almost exactly two-thirds of the amount given for church uses during the entire course of our period. The curve of religious giving sank with quite incredible velocity during the Reformation decades, when the £421.14s. provided amounts to only 5.30 per cent of the whole, the total being, for example, only about one-twelfth of that given during these years for the relief of the poor. We have observed in every county that in the Elizabethan age gifts and bequests for religious causes declined most markedly and significantly across England; in Bristol they all but disappeared. During this long interval the contributions for religious purposes amounted to no more than £314.13s., or only scantily more than 1 per cent of the munificent total provided for a broad spectrum of secular causes. There was a marked revival of religious interest in the early Stuart period, when £2,785.10s. was given for the needs of the Church,

but the increase was only relative, since the amount represents only 8.24 per cent of the whole of charitable funds and was considerably less than the sum given for experiments in social rehabilitation. During the revolutionary decades, when there was a pronounced slackening in all charitable giving, the £597.2s. designated for religious needs represents slightly more than 10 per cent of all charitable funds, almost the whole being Puritan contributions for the better support of the clergy.

Very possibly the gifts and bequests to the Church for its general use constitute the most sensitive barometer of men's devotion to its needs and obedience to its tuition. We have included within the category of "church general" a large variety of benefactions, ranging from gifts for lights, for the support of the service, for altars and images; to endowments for the general requirements of a parish church. In the late medieval period, and in all classes of society, at least small bequests within this range of interest had become customary and are to be found in almost all wills. These legacies must in their totality have been an important source of revenue in carrying forward the work of a priest and in maintaining decency if not dignity of service in the ordinary parish church. It is evident that these customary bequests were withering away in Bristol a full generation earlier than in most English communities, while the larger occasional endowments for the general needs of a parish, so common in most of the counties we have examined, were extremely rare in Bristol throughout our period.

During the whole of the long interval under study, pious men and women gave £1,702.2s. for the general needs of the Church, or 1.85 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the city. This wholly inadequate total, representing about £100 on the average for each of the parish churches, was in point of fact largely provided in the years prior to the Reformation, when rather more than half, £964.14s., was given. Moreover, of this total a considerable proportion is to be found in the bequest of property valued at about £400 which William, Lord Berkeley, left to the general uses of St. Augustine's Monastery in 1492.¹⁷⁵ In this early period, too, the parish church of St. Leonard, in 1580 united with St. John's, was the beneficiary under the will of a merchant and former mayor, John Hawkes, who in 1527 left to its general uses a third of his estate, the legacy being valued at £300.¹⁷⁶

Small or large, gifts and bequests for the general support of the Church in Bristol practically disappeared

¹⁷⁴ PCC 11 Dogett 1492; Barrett, *Bristol*, 250-257; Cokayne, G. E., ed., *The complete peerage of England* 1: 330, London, 1887. The property comprised several London houses, as well as lands in Worcestershire and Buckinghamshire.

¹⁷⁵ Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 1: 226; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 7: 130, 209, 212, 215, 278, 1936. Hawkes was a merchant trading in divers commodities to Spain, Ireland, Iceland, and France. He was Mayor of Bristol in 1471 and represented the city in Parliament in 1477.

¹⁷⁴ The proportions for the several counties examined are: Buckinghamshire, 13.45 per cent; Hampshire, 18.46 per cent; Kent, 26.77 per cent; Lancashire, 31.94 per cent; London, 19.50 per cent; Norfolk, 23.01 per cent; Somerset, 27.35 per cent; Worcestershire, 17.94 per cent; Yorkshire, 28.07 per cent.

during the period of more than two generations that extended from 1541 to 1620. In the whole of this interval, we have recorded contributions for such uses amounting to no more than £25.17s. In no other county or city of even roughly comparable wealth is such a withering of this type of support to be observed. There was a marked revival of concern, at least in relative terms, during what can be roughly described as the Laudian period, such contributions rising to £92.10s. in the third decade of the seventeenth century and to the substantial total of £618.9s. in the last decade before the outbreak of the Civil War.¹⁷⁷ During the decades of political unsettlement, gifts and bequests for the general needs of the Church fell away completely once more, the central interest of Puritanism, now in the ascendant, being to secure the better support of a more learned clergy.

The rapid, the all but complete, shifting of men's interest to purely secular concerns in Bristol after 1540 is the more remarkable when one considers the fact that considerable funds were provided in the two generations prior to the Reformation for chantries, endowed masses, and outright sums for prayers for the dead. In all, £4,461.11s. was given for these purposes, of which a large proportion (88.44 per cent) was in the form of endowments. The amount provided for prayers was much larger than that given for any other single religious use and was 4.85 per cent of the whole of Bristol's charitable funds. Most of these foundations were of course relatively modest, but it remains true that four of the thirty endowed chantries surviving in Bristol at the time of the Reformation had been established by benefactors of our period.

Thus in 1485 a pious lady, Alice Chester, who shortly before had enriched her parish church with carvings, hangings, and appropriate ornaments, established by will a chantry in All Saints' Church with an endowment of £150, in addition to leaving £6 outright for prayers.¹⁷⁸ A few years later, in 1491, a merchant, Richard Erle, left to lay trustees extensive properties, with an estimated value of £400, the income of which was to be used to found a chantry in Holy Trinity Church, paying the chaplain £6.13s.4d. yearly, and providing yearly obits at Witham Friary, Somerset, in the cathedral church of Wells, and in Saint Augustine's Monastery, Bristol.¹⁷⁹ In 1505 Thomas Hard-

¹⁷⁷ Seven of the donors in this decade, four being merchants, gave benefactions of £20 or more. Two of the larger benefactions were, interestingly, for the better support of church music. A merchant, Thomas Wright, in 1632 left £4 p.a. for his parish organist (PCC 79 Audley), and a clothier, Humphrey Andrews, in 1638 left three houses with a capital worth of £138 for the support of "an able musician, to play upon the organ" in Christ-church (PCC 44 Lee).

¹⁷⁸ PCC 14 Logge 1485; Waters, *Chester of Bristol*, 6; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 27: 237, 1904. Her husband, Henry Chester, a merchant and sheriff of the city, had died in 1470.

¹⁷⁹ PCC 6 Doggett 1491; Barrett, *Bristol*, 466; Wadley, *Wills*, 165-166.

ing, common clerk of Bristol and a substantial land-owner in Somerset, left property valued at approximately £500, the income to be used for establishing a chantry and for the support of a stipendiary priest.¹⁸⁰ Two years later a merchant, Philip Ringstone, left £120 to secure masses for his soul in numerous churches, as well as endowing an obit with an income of 7s. p.a.¹⁸¹ A chantry was settled, probably in 1515, by John Williams in St. Peter's Church, with an endowment of perhaps £250, the worth of which was listed in 1540, quite inexplicably, as £45.8s. p.a.¹⁸² Rather more than a decade later Andrew Norton, a member of a most gifted Bristol family, left £200 capital to secure prayers, without apparently attempting to arrange for the formal establishment of a chantry.¹⁸³

An interesting commentary on the religious temper of Bristol is found in the attitude of donors towards the numerous monasteries in and near the city. These monasteries at the time of their dissolution possessed an annual income, if Westbury College be included, of £1,003.17s.1d.,¹⁸⁴ representing a capital worth of perhaps £20,000. During the whole of our period, local donors gave £1,139 for various monastic uses, the principal amounts being for general purposes and for the building and repair of fabric. This represents on the whole an unusually large increment in the resources of monastic establishments during the years 1480-1540, amounting to an addition of something like 5 per cent of capital worth in a period of sixty years. But closer examination of the contributions reveals that a total of £516.13s. was given by members of the Berkeley family, they being nobility not closely linked with the life of the city; £550 was given by abbots of the period to their own houses; and £46.7s. by gentry from the surrounding countryside. In other words, no more than the tiny total of £26 was contributed by the freemen and burgesses of Bristol to the monastic foundations of their community during this long interval of two full

¹⁸⁰ PCC 35 Holgrave 1505; Wadley, *Wills*, 178.

¹⁸¹ PCC 28 Adeane 1507; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 7: 231, 1936; *Adams's chronicle*, 77-79. An exporter and importer, Ringstone dealt in wine, oil, woad, and sugar. He was sheriff in 1493 and was Mayor of Bristol in 1498 and 1506.

¹⁸² *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 8: 240-241, 1884; *ibid.* 32: 281, 1909; *Adams's chronicle*, 80; Wadley, *Wills*, 176. Williams was probably a merchant. The Court of Augmentations Record (Misc. Book 67: 561) indicates that the endowment was in the amount of £8 p.a., to provide the salary of "one honest priest," plus a sufficient amount for the distribution of bread to the poor. This account also suggests, I believe mistakenly, that the foundation was made in 1531. The great increase in capital value may well be accounted for by other benefactions for the chantry in the Chapel of Our Lady of the Bell House in St. Peter's Church.

¹⁸³ PCC 23 Porch 1527; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 2: 130. He was the son of Thomas Norton, Member of Parliament for Bristol, alchemist, and diplomatist. One of Andrew Norton's sons was William, the famous London printer.

¹⁸⁴ *VCH, Gloucs.* 2: 93, 108; Savine, A., *English monasteries on the eve of the Dissolution*, 281, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1909.

generations. The monasteries of Bristol, in the view of a particularly responsible and responsive society, no longer served any useful social or spiritual purpose in the community, a view which may have been reinforced by the fact that, Westbury College aside, these foundations at the time of the Expropriation were paying out under trusts nothing whatsoever in alms.

The curve of benefactions for the maintenance of the clergy of Bristol runs counter to that for all other religious purposes, particularly if endowments for lectureships are taken into account. In all, £1,223.3s., of which £1,040.9s. was capital, was given to secure more appropriate stipends for the parochial clergy of the city. This amount, representing 1.33 per cent of the whole of Bristol's charitable funds, was quite inadequate to better the extremely low stipends of most of the parochial clergy. It may be remarked that this was a cause which interested few merchant donors.

In the interval prior to the Reformation, £140.15s. was given to parish or monastic clergy, mostly in the form of small testamentary bequests or outright gifts. A substantial increase in benefactions for this purpose is to be observed during the Reformation period, when £248.17s. was provided, the bulk of which, however, is comprehended in the bequest of £12 p.a., or a capital worth of £240, by Dr. George Owen in 1559 in an effort to secure a more adequate stipend at least for one minister.¹⁸⁵ During the long Elizabethan period, benefactions for the support of the clergy all but disappeared, only £56.1s. having been given for this use. There was, in fact, no significant revival of interest in the now serious economic plight of the clergy until the beginning of the third decade of the seventeenth century, when a total of £190 was given for the augmentation of clerical incomes, to be followed, despite the unsettlement of civil war, with relatively substantial endowments for this purpose in the decades next following.

A considerably larger total, amounting to £1,410, was given by men of Puritan persuasion either for the endowment of lectureships or for the assistance of clergy whom they held in Calvinistic admiration. The earliest of the benefactions of this type was that of a Bristol draper, William Prewett, who in 1594 left to the parishioners of St. Nicholas's Church the advowson, which he had purchased for approximately £150.¹⁸⁶ The next considerable endowment came a generation later when the great and rich Puritan preacher, Thomas White of London, left £560 for sermons in Bristol, in addition to his other notable benefactions for his native city.¹⁸⁷ A few years later, in 1630, a rich Bristol merchant, Humphrey Brown, devised property with a value of £420 in two trusts; in one he charged the mayor and commonalty of the city to procure four sermons a

¹⁸⁵ *Vide ante*, 27.

¹⁸⁶ PCC 55 Dixy 1594; *Adams's chronicle*, 116; Wadley, *Wills*, 277-279. Prewett also left £18 outright to the poor, £13 and 10s. p.a. to almshouses, and £10 for the repair of highways.

¹⁸⁷ *Vide ante*, 29-30.

year in St. Werburgh's Church, to establish a learned lecture each Sunday afternoon preferably in St. Nicholas's or St. Werburgh's, "by some godly and learned preacher . . . bachelor of divinity at the least . . . for the better instructing of the people in the deep mysteries of God" and of His saving grace. The other provided for an annual sermon at Westbury-on-Trym and at Acton, and also for an augmentation of £7 p.a. in the stipend of St. Werburgh's while the residue was to be used for church lighting.¹⁸⁸ And, finally, we may mention the endowment vested in 1654 under the will of Samuel Pennoyer, a London draper born in Bristol, which created a weekly lectureship for St. Stephen's Church, Bristol, to be held by the ablest and most godly clergyman available. The lecturer, Pennoyer carefully provided, should be nominated by the Drapers' Company of London, which should pay him £12 p.a. for his services.¹⁸⁹

The indifference of Bristol's donors to the religious needs of the age is again markedly exhibited in the meager total provided for the care of the church fabric of the city and for the ornamentation of churches and their services. In all, £872.7s. was given for these purposes during the whole course of our period, representing less than 1 per cent of all benefactions and being approximately the amount provided for the relief of prisoners. Moreover, almost half of the entire sum was given in the decades prior to the Reformation, when many small contributions and a fair number of large bequests or gifts bespeak the concern of the citizenry with the ever-pressing needs of Gothic fabric. In this interval, to cite a few of the later and more substantial gifts for this purpose, Joan Thorne, the widow of the elder Robert Thorne, in 1523 left an estimated £24 for church repairs,¹⁹⁰ her son in 1532 bestowed £70 of his great benefactions for the same purposes,¹⁹¹ and in the next year, Thomas, Baron Berkeley, left £10 for monastery repairs, as well as £66.13s.4d. to build the high altar at St. Augustine's Abbey.¹⁹²

From the advent of the Reformation forward for almost a century, an extraordinarily generous and a rich burgher aristocracy, and poorer classes of men as well, exhibited an almost complete want of concern with a church fabric which was rapidly falling into decay.

¹⁸⁸ PCC 36 Scroope 1630; Egerton MS.; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 12: 158, 1888; *Adams's chronicle*, 206; *PP* 1823, 8: 609; *PP* 1824, 13: 535. Brown was sheriff in 1619. A native of Somerset, he was a merchant venturer by occupation. His interesting will is printed in full in McGrath, *Merchants and merchandise*, 53-56.

¹⁸⁹ PCC 388 Alchin 1654; *PP* 1837-1838, 26: 426. Pennoyer was a very rich man, with properties in London, Hertfordshire, Middlesex, and Ireland. His charitable bequests totaled £3,671, including an apprenticeship fund with a capital of £3,000.

¹⁹⁰ PCC 8 Bodfelde 1523.

¹⁹¹ *Vide ante*, 22.

¹⁹² PCC 3 Hogen 1533; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 9: 66; 1938; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 55: 171, 1933.

From 1541 until 1620, the total of contributions for the preservation and ornamentation of Bristol's seventeen churches was £144, or rather less than an average of £10 for each church in the city. The largest single gift in this entire period, in 1570, possessed a capital value of £40 and was, as it were, an afterthought, being the residue of income from a fund established for otherwise secular purposes. Such revival of concern as there was occurred in the Laudian period, when in two decades, 1621–1640, the wholly inadequate total of £291 was provided for the patching of a sadly decayed parochial church fabric by a number of donors, only one of whom, it may be noted, was of merchant status.

As we have suggested, the parochial church fabric of Bristol was nearly complete at the beginning of our period. It is consequently not surprising that no new churches were built in the city during the long period reviewed by this study. But there were also very few outlays for major renovations or enlargements of existing structures, despite the steady growth of the city during these years. In all, we have estimated that £2,461 was expended on church building, major renovations being included, of which £800 was for the erection of a church outside the city. Almost the whole of this sum was given in the decades prior to the Reformation, the total for these years being £2,050, a very considerable sum indeed. Only £100 was given for church building during the decades of Reformation, while during the incredibly secular age of Elizabeth no major outlays of any sort were undertaken. The modest total of £311 was given for renovations during the early Stuart period, with again, and more understandably, nothing at all during the two decades of political and religious upheaval.

The major undertakings of church building in Bristol may be very briefly noted. The Church of St. Stephen's, held by the abbots of Glastonbury, was rebuilt at the joint charge of the abbot and the parishioners between 1450 and 1490. The work, including the tower, had largely been done before the opening of our period, though we have estimated, most uncertainly, that perhaps £200 was subscribed by parishioners for the completion of the undertaking between 1480 and 1490.¹⁹⁸ John Newland, Abbot of St. Augustine's, made extensive repairs and enlargements on the abbey, building the west end of the church, remodeling the central tower, and repairing the roof of the north transept shortly before his death in 1515, at an estimated charge to his own funds of £400,¹⁹⁹ while Miles Salley, Bishop of Llandaff, reconstituted the east end of St. Mark's Church, where he was buried in 1516.²⁰⁰

Sir Robert Poyntz, of Iron Acton, Gloucestershire, a few years later erected the Jesus Chapel at St. Mark's at a cost of approximately £210, while also providing an annuity of £6 to secure prayers in his chapel.²⁰¹ In the late years of his term as Abbot of St. Augustine's (1515–1526), Richard Elliott expended an estimated £150 on the vaulting of the north transept of the church and on the construction of at least some of the stalls.²⁰² The largest outlay made by a Bristol donor for church building in the decades prior to the Reformation was the rebuilding of Walthamstow Church in Essex by Robert Thorne. Thorne, who had extensive properties in that county, was much interested in the building, which was carried out during his lifetime and on which he expended approximately £800.

These relatively minor outlays for new construction and major renovations, as has been said, all but complete the annals of church building in Bristol in our period. The merchant and mayor, Thomas White, whose considerable secular charities have already been discussed, by his will bequeathed the funds required to set up the choir stalls in the newly consecrated cathedral in 1542, but prudently ordered them to be taken from the dissolved house of the White Friars, one would suppose in the interests of economy.²⁰³ John Barker, another merchant and mayor, two full generations later, and with some aid from friends, made the next considerable contribution for church building when he paid £115 for the construction of the gallery in St. Augustine's Church.²⁰⁴ And, finally, we may note that in 1631 various parishioners subscribed £196 for the erection of a tower in the churchyard next St. Ewen's Church.²⁰⁵

The temper of Bristol throughout our period was secular, after 1540 most aggressively so. Perhaps no group of men in England gave so largely or so wisely of their means as did the mercantile aristocracy of this city. But these were evidently men of a new generation, men with a new and revolutionary vision of a different society. They were imbued with clearly defined aspirations to raise up new institutions which would better the lot of mankind. They possessed the courage and they were prepared to risk the substance required to bring this new world of man into being. Whether this profoundly significant and this so sternly secular resolution of the merchants of Bristol, and their

¹⁹⁸ PCC 28 Ayloffe, 1520; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 4: 76–77, 1880. Poyntz, who had married Margaret Woodville, daughter of the Earl Rivers, was a familiar of both Henry VII and Henry VIII.

¹⁹⁹ *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 3: 105, 1879; Barrett, *Bristol*, 269; Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 2: 52–53.

²⁰⁰ *Vide ante*, 27, 34.

²⁰¹ PCC 82 Hudleston 1607; *Adams's chronicle*, 159, 182; Barrett, *Bristol*, 617; *Bristol Rec. Soc.* 17: 3, 1951. Barker was a member of the Spanish Company and was accountant to the Merchant Venturers. He was chosen sheriff in 1593, mayor in 1606.

²⁰² *Adams's chronicle*, 228.

¹⁹⁸ Nicholls and Taylor, *Bristol* 2: 190.

¹⁹⁹ *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 3: 105, 1879; *ibid.* 14: 130, 1890; *DNB*.

²⁰⁰ PCC 26 Holder, 1516; *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 26: 264, 1903; Nicolas, N. H., *Testamenta vetusta* 2: 538, London, 1826; Pryce, George, *History of Bristol*, 147, Bristol, 1861; *DNB*.

like throughout England, was for good or for ill is even now not wholly certain.

The social institutions of Bristol had been reshaped in the course of a relatively short period by a very small mercantile elite. These men were imbued with an essentially secular vision of the world around them and their aspirations were translated into institutions of abiding strength. Merchant wealth and the merchant mind may truly be said to have dominated Bristol in the years to which we have lent our attention. Yet when we cross the wholly artificial borders of the County of Bristol into the County of Somerset a quite different social history confronts us. Somerset was a far more complex social entity, it was more conservative in its acceptance of an inevitable pattern of social change, and its destiny was in the charge of larger, more stable, and certainly far more numerous classes of men. No single class in Somerset, and we are mindful of the gentry, dominated its society as did the merchant aristocracy of neighboring Bristol, with the consequence that the whole thrust of social change proceeded much more cautiously and with a less implacable sense of direction. To the annal of this historical progression we may now turn.

III. SOMERSET

A. THE COUNTY

During the whole of our period Somerset was the most populous as well as the principal county in the west of England. It then comprised approximately 1,640 square miles, small adjustments having later been made favoring Dorset, and was in area the seventh county in the realm. A rolling and relatively fertile region, interlaced with rich valleys, the county enjoyed a mild climate, excellent pastures, and an abundant rainfall which made it in the early modern period one of the most favored agricultural regions in the realm.

The county was likewise one of the most populous in the kingdom. Though any effort to arrive at a close estimate is doubtless idle, the sixteenth-century muster rolls indicate that it probably ranked with Gloucestershire as one of the most populous of all the counties, Middlesex of course excluded, in the southern third of England, followed rather closely by Kent and then by Devon. Father Hughes, with some caution, estimates that its population in 1603 might have been as dense as 69 per square mile, or of the order of 113,000,¹ while Professor Usher would suggest a population, using a quite different method of reckoning, of somewhere between 152,000 and perhaps 183,000.² Our own very rough estimate, based principally on parish records, is that the population stood at between 115,000 and 130,000 in *ca.* 1600. There was no really large urban center in the entire county, its relatively dense

population being accounted for by the heavily settled, indeed, the overpopulated, rural parishes of the county, which were in many cases substantially more densely peopled in 1600 than they were in 1801 when the population stood at 273,577.

Somerset gained rapidly in wealth as well as population during the entire course of our period. The interesting calculations of Rogers and Buckatzsch, based on a number of subsidies, agree that the county stood fifteenth or sixteenth in relative wealth at the outset of our period and something like tenth in the realm at its close.³ Our own evidence, based principally on estate values and on amounts designated for charity, suggests a somewhat lower relative wealth for the county, but would nonetheless place it well within the second quarter of English counties, with its wealth resting squarely and almost wholly on agriculture.

The agriculture of the county was relatively well advanced throughout the fifteenth century. Sheep farming, in certain regions, became extremely profitable in the course of the period, providing an economic base for great wealth for bold landlords and for a host of new men who were prepared to undertake the speculative risks involved. There was persistent enclosure for sheep grazing towards the close of the fifteenth century and during the first quarter of the sixteenth century, which did not, however, lead to any considerable economic distress in a region growing rapidly in wealth and where the cloth industry was expanding. The wills and inventories of agricultural proprietors of all classes, particularly in the period before 1560, attest the widespread pasturing of sheep, flocks of some fifty to two hundred being not uncommon even for yeoman landholders.

The market for wool was happily local, the production of the county being insufficient to supply a cloth industry which flourished and was steadily expanding during almost the whole of the era under study. Woolen cloth, principally rather coarse and rough in texture, was manufactured in many small centers over most of the county, with a considerable degree of specialization developing towards the close of the sixteenth century. The industry, with its ancillary trades, was centered on Frome, Ilminster, Chard, Bridgwater, and Taunton. Frome, for example, was reputed in the reign of Charles I to be a town almost wholly made up of clothiers, weavers, and spinners.⁴ Much of the financing and administration of the industry came to be vested in a merchant group in Taunton, which, with several smaller trading towns, developed intimate and profitable commercial links with London capital. We shall later observe that these ties with the metropolis were the source of many of the principal

¹ Hughes, Philip, *The Reformation in England* 1: 32-34, New York, Macmillan, 1951.

² Usher, *Industrial history*, 98.

³ Rogers, J. E. T., *History of agriculture and prices in England* 5: 104-113, Oxford, 1887; Buckatzsch, E. J., The geographical distribution of wealth in England, 1086-1843, *Economic History Review*, 2nd ser. 3: 180-202; 1950.

⁴ S.P. Dom. 1631, CLXXXV: 40.

charitable benefactions made in the county, while London itself gained a steady increment of young men from Somerset who knew the cloth trade and its hazards and who assisted in its development on a large scale by London merchants. The ties of the county with nearby Bristol remained throughout our period more intimate and binding, though Somerset was ever restive with the economic dominance of the city over the whole great western area of which it was part. Somerset supplied men as well as food, cloth, and coal for the growing commerce of Bristol, while the expanding capital resources of the city were to assist materially in the rapid transformation of the economy of the county.

The cloth trade of Somerset was undoubtedly, after agriculture, the principal employer of men in the county just as it was a principal source of the county's wealth. During our entire period there was no considerable industrial development in the county. Cloth aside, the small market towns served directly the relatively simple needs of agriculture and the marketing of the considerable surplus of foodstuffs produced within the county. There were, however, old and still important extractive industries of some consequence in the economy of the region. The very old lead mines, principally in the Mendips, were worked throughout the sixteenth century in a somewhat desultory fashion and were considerably expanded and improved in the early seventeenth century by an influx of speculative capital drawn chiefly from London and Bristol. Sir Bevis Bulmer was the principal of several aggressive entrepreneurs who steadily lifted production until, it has been estimated, the shafts of the county were producing from 1,500 to 2,000 tons annually shortly after the close of our period.⁵

Somerset was likewise well supplied with easily worked coal seams, which, however, were not considerably exploited during our period, in part because of the competition of Welsh coals and in part because of the absence of urban and industrial markets in the southwest. Coal had been mined in the Middle Ages from time to time, but as late as 1586 the slender production of the county was sold principally to smiths, Bristol being supplied almost wholly from the more highly developed Kingswood Chase Field.⁶ Considerable speculative capital and better methods resulted in the opening of new pits and the rapid increase of production in mines at Stratton, Midsomer Norton, Clutton, Timsbury, Stoke Lane, and in several Mendip Forest points during the early Stuart period. But the industry was not a considerable employer of labor and there is little evidence that the coal workings in our period brought any substantial prosperity to the county

at large. Somerset, then, remained predominantly agricultural to a degree unusual even during our relatively early period.

B. GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE DATA

The sprawling western county of Somerset provided the very considerable total of £116,531.16s. for charitable purposes during the period under examination. This impressive sum places the county, with Norfolk and Lancashire, in the middling group of shires examined in our study, though it amounted to only a quarter more than the munificent sum contributed by the benefactors of Bristol. This charitable *corpus* was contributed by an extraordinarily large number of donors, there being 3,629 in all. The result was a very low average benefaction per donor, the amount working out to £32.2s.3d. for each benefactor and being, save for Yorkshire, the smallest average recorded in any county in England. The explanation lies in the unusually high proportion of charitable testators among the yeomanry and the husbandmen of the county, classes which together numbered somewhat more than 56 per cent of all donors. It is difficult to say whether this most interesting social phenomenon is to be accounted for by the fact that these groups were tenaciously and prosperously rooted in the economy of the county or by the historical accident that more wills of these quite obscure men and women happen to survive in Somerset than in most other parts of England.

The structure of charitable interests in Somerset was not markedly dissimilar to that in other primarily rural counties. The dominant preoccupation was with the state of the poor, for whom the very large total of £50,500.18s. was provided during our period. This amounts to 43.34 per cent of all charities and is strikingly similar to the proportion vested in various plans for poor relief in such counties as Hampshire and Worcestershire.⁷

The essential conservatism of social aspirations in Somerset is further suggested by the fact that a relatively high proportion of all benefactions was made for religious purposes. In total, £31,865.14s. was given for one or another religious cause, or 27.35 per cent of all charitable sums. With the notable exceptions of Lancashire and Yorkshire, the county was by far the most strongly and persistently interested in the various needs of the Church of the counties included in this study, while, it is important to note, proportionally its devotion to religious causes was well over twice as great as that we have observed in Bristol.

The support of the Church and the relief of the poor together absorbed almost 71 per cent of all the charitable contributions of the shire. The mounting requirements of education were, however, by no means neglected. In all, the considerable sum of £30,158.7s.

⁵ *VCH, Somerset 2: 377.*

⁶ Nef, J. U., *The rise of the British coal industry 1: 73-74, 88-90*, London, Routledge, 1932. Nef estimates production in the county at the beginning of the Elizabethan period at not more than 4,000 tons p.a.

⁷ The percentages for these counties are, respectively, 41.35 and 43.91 per cent.

was given for various educational needs during the years under study, or 25.88 per cent of all benefactions, which would establish Somerset in the middling range of the counties with which we are dealing, and substantially above Bristol, where 21.33 per cent of all charitable funds were disposed for educational uses.⁸

The charitable aspirations of the donors of the county were tightly and almost wholly concentrated on the three great philanthropic heads just discussed. A total of only £3,101.2s., amounting to no more than 2.66 per cent of all charitable funds, was given for the many kinds of experiments in social rehabilitation then being financed in England. A really insignificant sum of £905.15s., or 0.78 per cent of the total, was provided for municipal betterments during the whole of our long era. These were the forward-looking interests in which what may be described as the "venture capital" of English philanthropy was being vested. The strong conservatism of this western county is attested by the fact that when taken together these two great charitable heads commanded no more than 3.44 per cent of all charitable amounts, a proportion decidedly smaller than has been observed in any other county in our group and very possibly in any other county in England.

Nonetheless, Somerset found itself deeply and directly affected by the currents of social change in the realm. When we examine the shift in the charitable aspirations in the county, we see that they are typical of the realm at large, simply tending to lag approximately two decades behind the more sensitively attuned counties with important urban centers, and a full generation or more behind cities such as Bristol.

In the first of our intervals, slightly more than a quarter (26.51 per cent) of all the charities of the county were established when the large total of £30,890.18s. was given. Well over two-thirds (68.06 per cent) of this amount was dedicated to one or another religious cause and, it may be noted, the £21,025.16s. so provided constitutes nearly two-thirds (66.0 per cent) of the whole amount given for religious purposes during the entire period of our study. The surprisingly large total of £5,928.12s. was given for the support of education in the sixty years prior to the Reformation, or 19.19 per cent of all charities of the interval, while the needs of the poor commanded £3,278.1s., or slightly more than a tenth (10.61 per cent) of all benefactions.⁹

A profoundly significant and certainly a most dramatic shift in the charitable aspirations of the county occurred during the age of the Reformation. In all, £8,052.4s. was given to charity during these two troubled decades. But the whole emphasis of aspirations was in a state of active change, since the relief of the poor absorbed 43.14 per cent of all charitable bene-

factions made during these years; in fact, considerably more was provided for this purpose during these two decades than in the preceding sixty years. The needs of education were met with gifts totaling £2,149.1s., or rather more than a quarter of the whole, while the various religious activities were supported by gifts and bequests amounting to slightly less than a quarter (24.15 per cent) of the whole.

The metamorphosis of social aspirations may be even more clearly observed in the Elizabethan period. This was, it must be said, an interval when extraordinarily little was being provided for any charitable purpose in Somerset. During these four decades £8,116.1s. was given, or 6.96 per cent of the whole, an amount only slightly larger than that provided during the two preceding decades. But the proportion disposed to the several charitable heads underwent still greater and most significant change. The relief of the poor became the dominant interest, the several forms of aid absorbing well over two-thirds (68.58 per cent) of all charities during these years. At the same time, the financing of the various religious needs of the county was further and very sharply diminished, only £1,030.14s., or 12.70 per cent, being given for these purposes during this long interval. Gifts and bequests for educational uses were likewise markedly reduced, though contributions for plans of social rehabilitation and municipal betterment were on balance considerably increased.

The great outpouring of charitable benefactions in Somerset came during the early Stuart period, when in the course of four decades the great total of £58,917.11s. was given. This amount was almost exactly half (50.56 per cent) the charitable benefactions for our entire period. The needs of the poor commanded rather more than half, the generous total of £30,571.12s. having been provided for this purpose, of which a large proportion was given for the founding of a number of well-endowed almshouses through the length and breadth of the county. Upwards of £20,000 was poured into the educational resources of the county, somewhat more than a third (34.06 per cent) of all charities in this interval having been given for this purpose. The really pressing religious needs of the county were far better served in total amount, £6,959.5s., than during the preceding four decades, but nonetheless the proportion dedicated to these uses declined slightly from 12.70 per cent to 11.81 per cent. It is noteworthy that the aspirations of the county had become so fully concentrated on poor relief and education that together these two interests absorbed almost 86 per cent of the whole charitable giving.

The period of civil war and political unsettlement bore heavily on Somerset. The total given to charitable causes during these two decades fell precipitously to £10,555.2s., this being only about 9 per cent of the whole of the charitable sums provided during our period. These benefactions were heavily concentrated

⁸ The range is from 21.26 per cent for Buckinghamshire to 41.79 per cent for Lancashire.

⁹ The shift in charitable interests during the whole of our period may be examined in table 2 (Appendix).

on various plans for poor relief, commanding almost three-fourths (72.18 per cent) of all benefactions, with almshouse endowments continuing to enlist the interest of socially responsible men and women. A marked lessening of the absorption with the educational needs of the county is suggested by the fact that only £1,495 was provided for these uses, while the interest in the support of religious needs so far declined that only 8.58 per cent of all benefactions were made for this purpose.

Before proceeding to a more detailed examination of the charities of the county, we should pause to consider several statistical summaries which may throw some light on the social and institutional background from which these charitable endowments sprang. In this connection we have been particularly interested in the manner in which charitable benefactions were made. The gift to income—the gift for direct and immediate use—was normally in the nature of direct alms and was the typical instrument of medieval charity. On the other hand, the capital gift, which was an endowment in any one of several possible forms, tended to be larger in amount, was almost invariably better framed and more skilfully administered, and represented an effort on the part of the donor to project his aspirations into the historical future. The capital gift was the instrument wherewith benefactors of this period re-shaped and re-made the institutions of England and transformed the social structure of the realm.

In total, £94,224.4s. of the charities of Somerset was vested in endowments. This amounts to 80.86 per cent of the total of all gifts during our period and is remarkably similar in percentage terms to those observed in other counties, save for Bristol where, as we have noted, the extraordinarily high proportion of 91 per cent of all charitable funds was vested as capital. As we should expect, benefactions to almshouses, apprenticeship schemes, schools, university scholarships, and hospitals were almost wholly in the form of endowments, while the various religious uses were more heavily dependent on outright gifts or bequests. In Somerset, as in most other counties, the relief of the poor was in the earlier decades principally undertaken by outright doles. But as our period progressed and as the problem of poverty was frontally attacked, large endowments providing for substantial relief within a town or parish began to replace the older and almost casual doles. Quite inevitably, the outright gift was the charitable mechanism employed by the humble donor, while the endowment was the favored device of the rich benefactor who could command legal counsel and the skilled services of trustees. Very roughly, it may be said that almost 80 per cent of the 3,629 charitable donors of Somerset left or gave their benefactions in outright form, but that these were on balance poor men who, church building excluded, gave not much more than 5 per cent of the whole of the charities of the county.

We have also given rather detailed attention to the structure and the history of the charitable trusts of the county created during our period, whether by deed of gift or by will.¹⁰ In all, we have found reasonably full information regarding 102 such endowments, which possessed an original value of £1,697.3s. per annum, or, if we may assume a level interest rate of 5 per cent on trustee funds, a capital worth of £33,943. We have, therefore, quite full information regarding endowments which when taken together comprise 36 per cent of the total of the capital gifts and bequests made during our whole period. These foundations ranged unbelievably in size, seven having possessed an original capital value of £1,000 or more, while thirteen were created with capital sums of £20 or less. The immensely important impact of the Elizabethan framing of the law of charitable trusts is suggested by the fact that 72 per cent of all these foundations belong to the last sixty years of our period.

Quite full information has been gleaned regarding the legal structure of ninety-one of these charitable trusts, all of which fall into rather simple patterns. Thirty of them, ranging in capital worth from £10 to £1,379, were rent-charges, with the annual stipend payable to designated parish or municipal officers and with the legal title vested in private or official persons within the benefiting community. There were twenty-three which were vested in private trustees, in number ranging from three to twenty-four, who were named in the deed of gift and who were self-perpetuating under schemes of replacement of rather bewildering variety and complexity. An identical number were vested in parish officers in a number of combinations, usually including the clergyman. In six other cases the churchwardens alone were named as trustees, while in two instances the overseers of the poor were constituted the legal owners of the trust. The predominantly rural complexion of the county is attested by the fact that in only seven cases was the municipality, through its legally chosen officers, vested with the powers and responsibilities of trusteeship.

The historical record of these Somerset trustees, so casually appointed in many instances, affords remarkable proof of the stability of English institutions and the high sense of public duty borne by quite simple and often wholly untrained men. Only eleven of the original 102 trusts have disappeared, and in five of these cases it is quite certain that the funds were merged, very sensibly if illegally, with other and larger endowments being administered within parishes for the same general purposes. These "lost trusts" were, save one with an original capital worth of £300 which was lost in the nineteenth century, all relatively small and were in the main rent-charges which suffered erosion of values or which were swallowed up, prin-

¹⁰ For an extended discussion of this matter, *vide* Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 109–125, where Somerset data are included.

cipally in the eighteenth century, by overly acquisitive landowners. The original worth of these lost trusts was only £791 of capital value, which means that over a period of about three centuries only 2.3 per cent of the worth of all the charitable trusts created in our period fell victim to the vicissitudes of time and fortune.

Somerset trustees were as prudent as they were reliable. They invested these funds principally in agricultural land and in a considerable number of cases in long-term rent-charges on land. The consequence was that, while little capital was lost, the gain in the capital worth of the charitable trusts of the county failed to rise with the curve of the steady inflationary process which has marked the economic history of the past three centuries, in most decided contrast to the amazing record of Bristol's trustees. Hence the original capital worth of £33,943 for the trusts under consideration had increased at the latest available dates to ¹¹ £127,446 of capital value, a gain of slightly less than four times over. But the record of trusteeship is, nonetheless, on balance a proud vindication of the confidence displayed by the donors of our period in the future of the institutions which they were in process of creating for their society.

The women of this western county exhibited a lively and a significant interest in the creation of its social institutions. There were in all 531 women donors, constituting the very high proportion of 14.63 per cent of all charitable benefactors in our period, a proportion higher than that observed in any other rural county under consideration. These women gave in total £7,028.5s. to the various charities of the county, or 6.03 per cent of the whole of the charitable amounts provided during our period.¹² The average of their benefactions was relatively low, amounting to £13.4s.9d., as compared with £32.2s.3d., the average for all donors in the county. This is accounted for not only by the fact that women generally during our period disposed less alienable wealth than men, but that in Somerset an unusually high proportion of these women benefactors was drawn from the yeomanry and the ranks of the husbandmen.

The structure of the benefactions of these women donors is most interesting when considered in relation to the county as a whole. During the decades prior to the Reformation, £1,840.16s. was given to charity by women donors, this amounting to 26.19 per cent of the whole of their gifts, a proportion almost exactly identical with that given in the entire county (26.51 per cent) in these years. During these first years, it should be noted, of the charitable benefactions made by women

¹¹ It should be remarked that our information regarding modern values for the trusts of the county is not so recent as for the other counties studied. The latest available dates range from 1867 to 1953, with, however, a very considerable number being taken from the Parliamentary Survey of 1870.

¹² A comparison of Somerset's women donors, in relation to the county tables, may be of interest. *Vide ante*, 12, n. 17.

of known status, an extremely high proportion (81 per cent) was provided by members of the upper and lower gentry. In the Reformation period the proportion of the total gifts of women (6.84 per cent) was again almost precisely the same as that given in the county at large (6.91 per cent), while during the Elizabethan era the percentage (8.44 per cent) of the total provided by female benefactors was slightly higher than the proportion (6.96 per cent) for the county as a whole. In the early Stuart period the first significant variation becomes apparent when the £1,845.8s. given by women represents 26.26 per cent of the total of their giving, though this is the interval during which somewhat more than half of the benefactions of the entire county were made. The axiom that the great social gains of women have been made during periods of war and political unsettlement seems abundantly and dramatically confirmed by the fact that during the era of the civil wars and the revolutionary government women donors gave £2,268.12s., by far their largest total in any of our intervals, or 21.49 per cent of all charitable benefactions in the period. To emphasize this most interesting phenomenon in another way, the women donors of Somerset gave 32.28 per cent of all their benefactions during these troubled years, while only 9.06 per cent was provided by the county as a whole. There was, it may be observed, no substantial change in the social complexion of the women benefactors during the period. There were simply more women able to give because the control of estates had often passed into their hands, because much of disposable wealth in this troubled era had been lodged in them, and, we may believe, because women were attaining a larger measure of dignity and a fuller sense of responsibility as new and radical ideas were gaining ground across the breadth of England.

The structure of the social aspirations of women donors differed significantly from that of their male contemporaries in several important ways. It will be recalled that somewhat more than 43 per cent of all benefactions in the county was given for one or another form of poor relief. Women givers, rather surprisingly, were less interested in this grave social problem, providing approximately 41 per cent for this purpose and with a disproportionately higher percentage given for outright relief. At the same time, women donors persistently showed a greater interest in the several schemes for social rehabilitation of the needy, the sick, and the unfortunate, giving 7.31 per cent of all their benefactions for these purposes as compared with a meager 2.66 per cent for the county as a whole; in fact, somewhat more than one-sixth of all gifts and endowments for these purposes were made by women. The women benefactors of the county were decidedly less interested in education than were men, they having vested about 16 per cent for these uses as compared with almost 26 per cent for the county at large. Finally, as we should perhaps expect, women givers

throughout our period were more pertinaciously and generously concerned with the needs of the church than were their spouses and male relations. They gave 34.84 per cent for the various religious uses as compared with 27.35 per cent provided in the county as a whole.

C. THE STRUCTURE OF ASPIRATIONS

1. THE POOR

From the beginning of our period, there is evidence of a considerable and responsible concern for the state of the poor in Somerset. In the decade 1480-1490 we have recorded £86.13s. in gifts or bequests for the outright relief of the poor and £41 towards the enhancement of the resources of the few existing almshouses. This concern was to develop steadily as the economic problems of the Tudor age became critical. Few rural counties in England were more sensitively aware of the nature and extent of the blight of poverty than was Somerset, and few indeed showed more persistent ingenuity and generosity in an attempt to find means for its alleviation.

Benefactions for the relief of the poor during the whole course of our period reached the very large total of £50,500.18s., amounting to 43.34 per cent of the whole of the county's charitable funds. This proportion is not so considerable as in certain other counties, but as we analyze the character of the endowments created it seems probable that Somerset donors from a very early date exhibited a qualitative understanding of the nature of the problem rare indeed in most rural counties. Thus even of the £17,639.3s. left or given for the household relief of the poor, a remarkably high proportion (78.6 per cent) was in the form of capital sums which ensured the creation of resources and institutions designed to grapple aggressively and permanently with the sinister forces of poverty. Moreover, a really massive total of £29,413.13s. was given for the endowment of almshouses across the whole face of the county. These institutions were during our entire period the most hopeful and kindly of all the experiments designed to relieve impotence and abject distress. Somerset had a proud record in its effort to attack the sources and the depredations of poverty with its own resources and resolution.

During the years prior to the Reformation the not inconsiderable total of £3,278.1s. was given for one or another form of poor relief. Even during these early decades, it is interesting to note, the amount given for the endowment of almshouses considerably exceeded the sum provided for outright relief. The sum given for poor relief during this interval amounted to 10.61 per cent of all charitable funds, a high proportion indeed for these early years when the prevailing view of relief did not project much beyond the medieval conception of occasional alms. But even more remarkable was the record of the two Reformation decades

when the impressive total of £3,473.8s. was given for poor relief, amounting to 43.14 per cent of all charities in these years, and somewhat exceeding the amount provided during the six previous decades. Nor was this all, for when the various forms of poor relief are combined, upwards of 80 per cent of this large total was in endowments rather than the all too common funeral doles or outright testamentary payments. Philanthropy in Somerset was not impressive during the Elizabethan era; in these forty years only £5,565.15s. was given for the care of the poor. It should be noted, however, that almost 70 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the interval was dedicated to the relief of poverty. The great outpouring came during the early Stuart age when £30,571.12s. was provided for the several forms of poor relief. This amounted to somewhat more than half (51.89 per cent) of all charities and, perhaps even more significantly, to about 60 per cent of the total given for poor relief during the whole of our long period. Large amounts were dedicated to outright relief and to general charitable purposes, but the really decisive fact was that the great sum of £21,898.17s. was vested by many substantial donors for the endowment of almshouses. It is too much to say that in this brief interval of forty years an heroic attack was made on poverty and indigence by men who gave largely of their means in an effort to clear the social conscience of the county. Somerset suffered seriously from the Civil War, with the result that all charitable contributions declined markedly, but nonetheless the relatively large sum of £7,612.2s. was provided for poor relief during these two decades, amounting to almost three-fourths (72.12 per cent) of the whole of the charitable benefactions of the era.

We should now sketch at least in brief detail the foundation of some of the larger or more interesting of the many endowments for the outright, or household, relief of the poor, noting as well certain of the endowments for general charitable purposes when the donor included outright relief as one of the responsibilities to be undertaken by his trustees.

In 1492 John Reve of Dinder granted by deed to Richard Atwell and other trustees a house and garden and certain lands with an estimated value of £120 for the general benefit of the parishioners of that place and for doles for poor persons.¹³ Some years later, and probably in 1511 or 1512, Dionysia Holway, widow and executor of Thomas Holway, conveyed lands and urban property to trustees for the general benefit of the parish of Wiveliscombe, the maintenance of poor persons and the repair of the church being among the charges laid upon her feoffees. These properties were undervalued in the original lease, their worth being of the order of £200 capital value.¹⁴

The poor of the town of Taunton were the bene-

¹³ *PP* 1820, 5: 338-340. The deed is dated 4 April, 21 Henry VII.

¹⁴ *PP* 1826, 13: 404-407.

ficiaries of the charity of an unknown donor, probably named Stringland, who in or about 1536 conveyed eighteen acres of pasture land, lying within the limits of Taunton, with a then capital value of something like £200.¹⁵ The poor of Taunton likewise benefited under the will of an early merchant of that town, who traded in France and Spain. John Joyce, who apparently died in Bilbao, Spain, in 1536 left £25 outright to the poor of Taunton, the same amount to the poor of Croscombe, and £50 to the poor of London.¹⁶ Another Taunton merchant, Roger Hill, one of the founders of the grammar school in the town, at his death in 1546 left £100 outright to the poor, to be paid in doles at the time of his burial and at his month's mind.¹⁷

These bequests, though relatively large, are typical of the benefactions made for the benefit of the poor in the period prior to the Reformation. They were crudely and imperfectly established in so far as they were trusts, too eccentrically lavish in so far as they were burial doles. But a tradition had been firmly seated which was to receive even more generous support during the decades when the Reformation settlement was effected. Thus in 1557 Lady Joan Wadham, widow of Sir Nicholas and grandmother of the founder of Wadham College, left £30 to be bestowed in clothing on the poor of Ilton at the time of her burial, together with the substantial sum of £200 to be distributed to poor men and women at the funeral, her month's mind, and on the occasion of the first anniversary of her death.¹⁸

Though we have not regarded it as a charitable benefaction, mention should also be made of a considerable property which came into the hands of the municipal government of Taunton in the early seventeenth century. After a visitation of the plague, some forty houses in the town remained unoccupied, for which no lawful heirs ever appeared. After a long interval these properties, together with almost two

¹⁵ *PP* 1821, 12: 495-496. This property, which was worth £ 27 p.a. in 1735, seems to have fallen illegally into the hands of the trustees of Pope's almshouse (*vide post*, 54) sometime before 1672. After an enquiry, a decree of the Charity Commissioners in 1735 ordered it returned to separate trustees and the income used for yearly distributions to the poor of the town. However, the Charity Commissioners of 1821 found that the decree had never been acted upon and its existence was unknown to the then trustees of the almshouse, though the income of the lands was used in part for the repair of the almshouse and in part for poor relief in the parish of St. Mary Magdalen. Thus the poor benefited in any case.

¹⁶ PCC F.1 Dyngeley 1536; *Somerset Record Society* 21: 22-23, 1905.

¹⁷ PCC 7 Alen 1546; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 25, 1888; *ibid.* 21: 82-83, 1905; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 444-445; Archbold, W. A. J., *The Somerset religious houses*, 288-289, Cambridge, The University Press, 1892. *Vide post*, 62.

¹⁸ PCC F.29 Wrastley 1557; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 197-200, 1905; *DNB*.

hundred acres in Upper Ottery and Ottery St. Mary, Devon, were expropriated by the town and the rents applied for the relief of the poor of the municipality. The legal title and use were determined by a decree of the Charity Commissioners in 1613, who ordered that three-fourths of the then net income should be applied for the relief of the poor of the community and the remainder for various schemes of social rehabilitation such as marriage portions and loans to poor but worthy tradesmen.¹⁹

The parish of St. Decuman's came into the possession of a considerable charity from unknown donors in *ca.* 1565, consisting of four houses and grounds and almost thirty acres of land, which was to be used for the general charitable needs of the community. The property seems to have possessed a capital value of approximately £335 when in 1583 a deed of conveyance was made to twelve new trustees which ordered the income to be employed for the relief of the poor of the parish, the repair of the church, and the maintenance of soldiers serving the Queen in her wars in Ireland or elsewhere.²⁰ A similar property, also the gift of unknown donors, came into the possession of the parish of Trull during the Elizabethan period and was used for the general charitable needs of the community. These lands and buildings, with a capital value of about £305, fell into the hands of copyholders who in 1610 had to be compelled to acknowledge the trust and to resume payment of annual rentals which were used for the relief of the poor, the repair of the church, and the apprenticeship of poor children.²¹

In 1578 Thomas Webb, Esq., of Beckington vested in trustees a rent-charge of £6 per annum on properties in Wiltshire and Somerset, of which £5 was to be distributed amongst the worthy poor of the parish according to the discretion of the churchwardens, while the remainder was to be similarly devoted to the relief of the poor of the parish of Rode.²² The poor of Bridgwater were favored under the will of Robert Blake, a member of the lower gentry, who in 1592 left the substantial sum of £240 to the town on trust. Half the amount was to be invested as a stock for the relief of poor men and women and the rest was to be used as an endowment for the maintenance of a causeway within the parish.²³ A few years later a prosperous Somerset yeoman, Richard Tapp (*alias* Tilley) left capital sums of £40 each to the parishes of Cannington, Taunton, and Stogursey, as well as an indeterminate sum for the poor of Bridgwater, to be

¹⁹ *PP* 1821, 12: 509-518; Toulmin, Joshua, *The history of the town of Taunton*, 44-46, Taunton, 1791. The income of the trust in 1614 was £ 55.5s.; in 1724 the available income had risen to approximately £ 200 p.a.

²⁰ *PP* 1826, 13: 442-443.

²¹ *PP* 1821, 12: 542-544.

²² PCC 48 Brudenell 1585; *PP* 1820, 4: 313-315; Collinson, John, *History of Somerset* 2: 202, 224, London, 1791.

²³ PCC 76 Harrington 1592; *PP* 1826, 13: 421.

allocated by his executors from the remainder of his estate.²⁴

Space will permit the enumeration of no more than a few of the many and the very substantial endowments created for household relief of the poor during the early Stuart period. Before 1612 certain property was given to the parish of St. James in Taunton for the support of poor relief. A petition of the overseers in that year made it clear that the income of £14 p.a. had been misapplied.²⁵ Francis James, chancellor of the diocese of Bath and Wells, on his death in 1616 left £50 to the poor of Wells and identical sums for the relief of poor persons in Bristol, "where he lived many comfortable years," and in Wareham and Dorchester (Dorset).²⁶ A year later William Plumbeley, a gentleman of East Harptree, devised to five trustees valuable lands and tenements with a capital worth of £400 for the uses of the poor of his parish. He left careful instructions regarding the management of the property, which he wished to have rented under short-term agreements, and required that the annual revenue be distributed to needy persons at the discretion of the vicar and the churchwardens.²⁷ In 1620 a Taunton merchant tailor, Thomas Trowbridge, left a carefully ordered endowment for the relief of the poor of that town. Trowbridge had as early as 1614 assigned certain properties to trustees, to which additional capital was joined to secure an annual stipend of £6. His trustees, who must always be citizens of Taunton, were to use the income for the relief of "the most poorest, eldest, honest and impotent poor" of the parish of St. James and St. Mary Magdalen. Trowbridge further stipulated that this stipend was to be employed to secure increased relief for poor persons and under no circumstances for the reduction of the poor-rates, lest "the benefit thereof might be turned to the rich, and taken from the poor, which was altogether against the trust and true meaning" of the foundation.²⁸

A clothier of Bath, who had served his city for eight terms as mayor, made generous dispositions for the poor of that place on his death in 1621. William Sherston, who was a grandfather of the redoubtable William Prynne, to whom he left £100, bequeathed £100

²⁴ PCC 15, 86 Kidd 1599; Brown, *Wills* 5: 17, 68; *PP* 1826, 13: 358.

²⁵ *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 23: 84, 1907.

²⁶ PCC 43 Cope 1616; *PP* 1823, 8: 601; *Miscellanea genealogica et heraldica*, n.s. 4: 82, 84, 1884; Wadmore, J. A. W., *Parochial history of Barrow Gurney*, 10, Bristol, 1897. James was a native of Staffordshire. One of his brothers was Bishop of Durham and another a rich merchant. James had been M.P. for Dorchester (1592), Master in Chancery, and Judge of the Court of Audience of the Archbishop of Canterbury.

²⁷ PCC 91 Meade 1618; *Misc. gen. et her.*, n.s., 4: 95, 1884; *PP* 1825, 11: 151-153.

²⁸ PCC 45 Soame 1620; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 240; *PP* 1821, 12: 497-499.

for the repair of "the Church of Peter and Paul" and a total of £260 to the poor of Bath. His executors were to distribute £60 to twelve poor men, they being mourners at his funeral, and £100 outright to the chamberlain of the city to be given out each year to the poor most in need. In addition, charges were laid against certain property in the amount of £2 p.a. which should be paid for the succor of indigent persons until a total of £100 had been distributed.²⁹

The county of Somerset was an important beneficiary under the will of the great London philanthropist, Henry Smith, whose remarkable charity has been more fully described in another place.³⁰ His trust named as beneficiaries four parishes in the county: Batheaston, which was to have £10 p.a. for the general care of the poor, Newton St. Loe with £30 p.a., Shapwick with £5 p.a., and Stanton Prior, which was to benefit in the amount of £10 p.a. In all, therefore, the capital value of Smith's benefaction to the poor of Somerset may be regarded as of the order of £1,100 at the time the trust became effective in 1628.³¹

A clergyman of Shepton Beauchamp, William Owsley, is best remembered for a scholarship fund which he endowed for his own and neighboring parishes,³² but he likewise left at his death in 1630 a capital sum of between £200 and £300 for the relief of the poor of Misterton and Crewkerne.³³ A few years later, in 1634, a London merchant left £300 on trust to the municipal authorities of his native Bridgwater with the instruction that the capital be invested in lands or houses and the income be divided equally for the maintenance of a lectureship, for the support of the free school, and for the relief of the poor "without partiality to any."³⁴ In 1638 a member of the lower gentry of the county, George Rogers of Cannington, left a capital sum of £100 each to the parishes of Cannington and Porlock, to be employed for the aid of the worthy poor in those places.³⁵

These endowments for the relief of the poor in various parishes were, it will be observed, relatively modest in amount, save for the great legacy of Henry Smith. There were simply a great many of them established during the interval 1601-1640, when a total of £6,867.15s. was provided by socially responsible

²⁹ PCC 91 Dale 1621; Peach, R. E., *Historic houses in Bath* 2: 123, 142-144, London, 1884.

³⁰ *Vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 35, 117-122, 182, 283, 309-310, 343.

³¹ It should be noted that Smith's bequest is not, even in this amount, included in the Somerset tables and totals, since it was primarily a London charity, vested by a Londoner.

³² *Vide post*, 67.

Somerset 2: 454.

³³ PCC 59 Scroope 1630; *PP* 1823, 9: 483-488, 502.

³⁴ PCC 63 Seager 1634; *PP* 1826, 13: 421-422; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 447. *Vide post*, 64, 72. This merchant, Richard Castleman, also left £50 as a loan fund to Barnstaple, Devon (*PP* 1823, 9: 19).

³⁵ PCC 56 Lee 1638; Brown, *Wills* 2: 91-92.

men and women in capital sums ranging from £10 to £502. These donors were drawn from all classes in the society, from yeomen to the upper gentry, with the foundations made by London merchants and by members of the local gentry predominating in amount though not in number.

During the years of political upheaval the flow of contributions towards this worthy purpose continued with only slight abatement, a total of £3,119.9s., of which almost the whole was capital, having been given for household relief. In this period, too, the endowments created were numerous and were the gift of men of all classes. They were also relatively small in average amount, none being constituted with a capital of more than £500. Thus, in 1642 Augustine Jeffries of Wells, of uncertain social status, left to his town government the sum of £200 for the relief of poor burgesses or other poor inhabitants. He enjoined his widow, she being executor, "with the best counsel at law" that could be secured, to purchase landed property with the bequest and to settle it legally upon the mayor and "the three eldest masters," with the further provision that the sum paid to each poor family should not exceed £1 p.a.³⁶ A Taunton clothier, Robert Moggaridge, who died in 1646, left £10 in outright doles to the poor and provided as well three annuities of £5 each to be employed for the succor of "honest and religious poor people" in the parishes of Taunton St. James and Taunton St. Mary Magdalen and in the town of Bampton, Devon. His will further provided that in the event of his daughter's death without issue, one-fifth of her remainder should be employed for the "maintenance of the cause for King and Parliament in the garrison where I shall die, so long as the Parliament lasteth, to unite them in love."³⁷

A London draper, Samuel Bird, a native of Wiveliscombe, bequeathed £200 to his native parish in 1647 for the support of honest but indigent persons of the community.³⁸ A few years later, in 1652, a prosperous yeoman of Winsford, George Joyce, devised his farm of about one hundred acres to trustees for the benefit of the poor of the parishes of Winsford, Cutcombe, and Wootton Courtney, on the death of his wife. The property, which was probably valued at £400, was established more fully as a trust under a decree of Chancery in 1691.³⁹ At the very close of our period,

³⁶ PCC (not registered, pr. September 16, 1642); *PP* 1820, 4: 360.

³⁷ PCC 14 Twisse 1646; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 240; *PP* 1821, 12: 520-521.

³⁸ PCC administration 1650; Collinson, *Somerset* 2: 491; *PP* 1826, 13: 403-404. A judicial enquiry revealed in 1762 that the surviving trustee, Philip Hancock, had died intestate, leaving John Hancock, who had for some years resided in "some part of the back settlements of North America," as his heir at law. This worthy failing to return, an arrangement was reached under which new trustees were appointed by the court.

³⁹ PCC 185 Aylett 1655; *PP* 1826, 13: 389.

by a will dated December 10, 1660, Mary Smith of Long Ashton, a member of the gentry, bequeathed £300 to trustees to secure the complete maintenance of four poor persons resident in that parish.⁴⁰

In all, as we have noted, benefactors of the county gave £17,639.3s. for the outright relief of the poor as well as £3,448.2s. for general charitable purposes, which was in effect employed in the main for this pressing need. Of these combined amounts, £17,239.13s. was in the form of endowments, scattered as relatively modest capital sums through a great many parishes to assist the county in bearing the burden of its poor relief. This means that by the close of our period an annual income of something like £862 was available for this purpose as a consequence of the generosity of many scores of benefactors over a long period of accumulation. On the average, Somerset donors assumed that £2.10s. p.a. was sufficient to support an indigent family in its own house, which would suggest that perhaps 344 such poor families may have been maintained by private charity, without the employment of public money.

But these considerable endowments reflect only a fraction of the large total of £50,500.18s. which benefactors of the county provided for the care of the poor. As we have already suggested, Somerset is notable for its numerous almshouses founded during our period, into which it poured a total of £29,413.13s.; of this, rather more than 98 per cent was in capital gifts. This great total represents somewhat more than a quarter (25.24 per cent) of all charitable benefactions for the entire county, a proportion, it may be remarked, quite unmatched in any other county in the realm.⁴¹ The interest of charitable men of Somerset in these foundations, all of which were very different in conception and constitution from the medieval hospitals which were their forerunners, was continuous after the building and endowment of the first almshouse at Glastonbury in 1512. During the first of our intervals a total of £1,559.10s. was given for new foundations or for the support of derelict medieval hospitals in several towns. Relatively little (£124.8s.) was provided during the Reformation years, when medieval hospitals which had maintained their responsibilities for almsmen were being secularized and reorganized. Nor was the amount given for these establishments particularly large during the Elizabethan era, when no more than £1,350.18s. of such endowments has been recorded. The great outpouring came during the first four decades of the seventeenth century, when, donors having been encouraged by the late Elizabethan legislation and the most evident success of existing institutions, the huge total of £21,898.17s. was left or given for almshouses, with the result that these still experimental institutions became widely and solidly established

⁴⁰ Collinson, *Somerset* 2: 303; *PP* 1825, 10: 410-411.

⁴¹ The range extends from 2.04 per cent in Lancashire to 18.48 per cent in Buckinghamshire in the other counties included in this study.

throughout the county. Even the unsettlement of the revolutionary decades did no more than retard the flow of funds for this purpose, for the generous sum of £4,480 was vested in these foundations in this brief interval.

Somerset was not without almshouses at the close of the Middle Ages. Prior to 1480 there seem to have been fifteen hospitals founded in the county, principally in the course of the thirteenth century, of which nine retained at least for some time functions which might fairly be described as those of almshouses. There is evidence that seven of these were functioning, whether well or indifferently, when our period begins and of this number four received small bequests as almshouses in the interval 1480–1540. Perhaps the most notable and best administered of all these was the Hospital of St. John the Baptist in Bath, founded in 1180, which was caring for six almsmen in 1548 and which then enjoyed endowments worth £25.13s.8d. p.a.⁴² This hospital was undisturbed by the Reformation settlement, as was the Hospital of St. Katherine at Bedminster. This latter institution, founded in 1219, possessed revenues of £21.10s. p.a. in 1548, but for many years prior to that date the income was consumed by administrative expenses and salaries, no more being done for the poor than the assignment of three cottages to as many poor men with no further maintenance.⁴³ There was likewise an almshouse at Bruton, probably of fourteenth-century origin, which seems to have cared for two or three almsmen, though it was unendowed and depended wholly on occasional bequests and outright gifts.⁴⁴ The fourteenth-century almshouse at Langport also survived without endowment, supporting in the early years of our period only two almspeople and depending on income gifts.⁴⁵ Similarly, the old (1236) hospital at Taunton possessed no endowment at the beginning of our era, but did enjoy the steady support of the citizenry of the town for the care of an uncertain number of sick and needy almspeople.⁴⁶ The Hospital of St. John the Baptist at Wells, a very early (1204–1209) thirteenth-century foundation, was well endowed at the time of the visitation of 1535, the rents being valued at £40.0s.2d. p.a., and had enjoyed considerable support in the early sixteenth century. But this institution was nonetheless confiscated, since it was principally concerned with chantry obligations and the support of a semi-monastic brotherhood, headed by a prior, and made no provision for almsmen.⁴⁷ An almshouse had also been founded at Wells by Bishop Nicholas Bub-

⁴² *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 148, 1888; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 152–153.

⁴³ *Ibid.* 2: 153–154; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 272–273, 1888.

⁴⁴ *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 16: 91, 349, 1901; *ibid.* 19: 229, 1903.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.* 21: 39, 108, 1905.

⁴⁶ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 158; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 39, 146, 1905.

⁴⁷ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 158–160; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 44, 129–130, 1903.

with, successively Bishop of London, of Salisbury, and of Bath and Wells, some time before his death in 1424. The endowment available for maintenance was valued at £13.5s.4d. by the Chantry Commissioners, who apparently took no action to expropriate the foundation.⁴⁸ The hospital at Yeovil, founded just before the beginning of our period (1477) by a London clergyman, William Woburn, with an estimated endowment in 1530 of £360, was well administered under local lay trustees, gave support to six poor men and as many needy women, and clearly possessed the respect and support of the local citizenry. It remained quite undisturbed by the expropriations of the Reformation era.⁴⁹

These seven functioning almshouses, only three of which were endowed, provided maintenance for approximately twenty-six almspeople as our period opened. All seven foundations received scattered support, in small amounts, from benefactors in the county in the late years of the fifteenth century and considerably more substantial benefactions during the first three decades of the sixteenth century. It was on this historical base that Somerset began to build, solidly and well, as the sixteenth century opened.

The first of these modern foundations was undertaken in *ca.* 1512 by the great Abbot of Glastonbury, Richard Bere (1493–1524). Bere built an almshouse for ten women at a cost of approximately £300 and assigned to their support an endowment with a capital value of £380, each almswoman receiving a stipend of 9d. weekly for her whole maintenance. This almshouse was untouched by the Reformation settlement and the endowment was continued from the sequestered funds. At the same time a second almshouse was created at Glastonbury, from earlier endowments, with a settled revenue of £18 p.a., which apparently offered sustenance to ten or possibly as many as twelve poor men.⁵⁰

In about 1530 a second almshouse, usually described as the Portreeve's Almshouse, was established at Yeovil by the generosity of the burgesses of the town and with the help of unknown donors. The house was apparently endowed with properties yielding an income of £10 p.a., provision being made for the care of four old and indigent women of the town on these premises.⁵¹ Almost a generation later a member of the lower gentry, Thomas Clerke of Wookey, who also maintained a residence at Wells, in addition to providing twenty marks for the poor of Wells and Wookey and the same amount for the repair of the

⁴⁸ *PP* 1820, 4: 345–348; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 408; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 154–155, 1888.

⁴⁹ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 161; *PP* 1820, 5: 317–325, 557–590.

⁵⁰ *PP* 1824, 14: 405–408; Warner, Richard, *An history of the abbey of Glaston, 267–269, Bath, 1826*; Holmes, T. S., *Wells and Glastonbury*, 227, 266, London, Methuen, 1908; Pevsner, Nikolaus, *The buildings of England, South and West Somerset*, 179–180, London, Penguin, 1958; *DNB*. *Vide post*, 73.

⁵¹ *PP* 1820, 5: 334–335.

road between the two towns, left his mill at "Keward" in trust with the provision that a rent-charge of £5.6s.8d. p.a. should be paid for the support of an almshouse at Wells, presumably a new or at least a very recent foundation there.⁵²

The first of the Elizabethan foundations was made in 1567 by a yeoman, John Thomas, who some years earlier had built an almshouse at Worle for the shelter and support of three almspeople at a charge of £50. At his death Thomas bequeathed £8 with which to provide cows for the almshouse and gave as well £60 for its permanent endowment.⁵³ A few years later, John Powlett, Marquess of Winchester, by indenture vested in trustees two cottages to be used as almshouses at East Pennard, as well as certain other properties to supply an endowment of £120 estimated value for the support of the almspeople.⁵⁴ In 1589 a great London merchant clothier, Alexander Every, a native of Broadway, bequeathed substantial benefactions to his native county and to Axminster, Devon, where he had cloth interests. He provided £120 for the poor of two Somerset parishes, as well as £100 for the poor of Axminster, and loan funds for tradesmen in three towns. Every's will further required his executors to employ £100 for building almshouses for seven poor men and women, residents of Broadway, each cottage to have a lower room and a chamber and a convenient garden forty feet in length. The donor had some years earlier purchased the profits of the rectory and parsonage of Broadway, from which £21 p.a. was to be employed as an endowment for the permanent support of his almspeople.⁵⁵ Two years later Thomas Pope of Taunton, probably a merchant of that town, conveyed to trustees by indenture premises suitable for the housing of twelve almswomen and other properties as an endowment for their support.⁵⁶ The last of the Elizabethan foundations was established at Cannington. Buildings suitable for four almspeople were provided at an estimated cost of £60 and rent-charges were laid on manors and other lands in Devon, Dorset, and Somerset to provide an annual stipend of £8 for the support of the beneficiaries of the trust.⁵⁷

In somewhat less than a century (1512-1599) nine additional almshouses had been founded in communities well dispersed across the breadth of the county. These establishments had been endowed with £2,110, not including the value of the buildings, and offered shelter

⁵² PCC 26 More 1555; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 159-160, 1905. *Vide ante*, 53, and *post*, 55.

⁵³ PCC 29 Stonarde 1567.

⁵⁴ PCC 48 Daughtry 1577; *PP* 1820, 5: 347; Phelps, William, *The history of Somersetshire* 2: 261, London, 1839; *Complete peerage* 8: 173, 1898.

⁵⁵ PCC 34 Leicester 1589; Brown, *Wills* 1: 73; *PP* 1826, 13: 325. *Vide post*, 59.

⁵⁶ *PP* 1821, 12: 494-497. The endowment income, which had run to £45 p.a. in 1790, had lapsed by 1870.

⁵⁷ PCC 68 Kidd 1599.

to at least fifty-four almspeople. To these may be added the surviving earlier foundations, all of which were still functioning, and which with endowments gained in the early years of the century in the amount of about £873, offered care for an additional twenty-six of the indigent of the county. A fair beginning had thus been made by the close of the Tudor period in the development of notable institutions for the succor of the hopelessly poor.

The first of the series of great and successful foundations that marked the early Stuart period was the notable almshouse established by Sir John Popham in or slightly before 1608 at Wellington.⁵⁸ In addition to bequests of £60 made to create stocks for the poor of Wellington and four other Somerset parishes, Popham's will provided £300 for the erection of an almshouse in that town for the benefit of the poor of the community and for those of Buckland. Space was to be arranged for six "true working or labouring people" and six women, as well as two orphaned poor boys who were to be maintained until they were nine years of age and then suitably apprenticed. Each adult almsperson was to have an apartment of two rooms. A workhouse, or house of correction, was likewise to be provided on the premises for able-bodied poor, this subsidiary institution to be under the direction of the oldest and most discreet man or woman amongst his almspeople. The will further established an endowment for the support of the almshouse, each almsperson, save for the two senior inmates who had administrative responsibilities, to have £2.12s. p.a. for maintenance and 9s. p.a. for clothing. Each orphan upon being bound out was to have a stipend of £3.6s.8d. for his fee or as a stock for the beginning of his trade, and any residue was to be fostered in order to increase the endowment provided for the almshouse.⁵⁹

In this same year the almshouse at Wells was greatly strengthened and enlarged under the terms of the will of John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells. This churchman left the substantial sum of £500 as an augmentation of the existing endowment, enabling the civic authorities in whom the trust was vested to increase to twenty-four the number of almspeople being housed and maintained. Nominations were limited to old and decayed burgesses, natives of Wells, unless none stood

⁵⁸ Popham, Chief Justice of the King's Bench, was a native of Huntworth, Somerset. He had been a prime mover in the drafting of the statute, 39 *Eliz.*, c. 4, for the punishment of rogues and vagabonds, and was interested in the early American colonial ventures. He acquired extensive estates in Somerset, Wiltshire, and Devon, regarding as his home his mansion house at Wellington. He left property worth £11,998 in addition to two manors, other scattered lands, and the parsonage of Wellington and Buckland.

⁵⁹ PCC 58 Wingfield 1608; *DNB*; *PP* 1826, 13: 398-402. The plan for the foundation had long been forming in Popham's mind. The first draft of his petition for a license was dated 1594, his then intention being somewhat more modest (Lansdowne MSS. 77: 50).

in such need, in which case poor men resident in the city for at least seven years might be named. This endowment was further augmented in 1615 by the gift of £269 of capital by Nathaniel Still, son of the Bishop, who in this same year was appointed Sheriff of Somerset. This bequest made it possible to increase the number of almspeople to thirty, though the house must have been hard pressed to support so many despite the flow of small gifts and bequests for immediate use which mark this period of its history.⁶⁰

A well-endowed almshouse was established at Ilton in 1606 by the generosity of the great Somerset philanthropist, Nicholas Wadham. Some years earlier he had built suitable dwellings at a cost of upwards of £300, which he endowed by vesting in trustees lands and other real property with an annual value of £42 in order to secure the full maintenance of eight almspeople.⁶¹ A more modest foundation was made shortly afterwards at Bridgwater when a local merchant, Alexander Jones, built quarters for three almsmen just outside the town at a probable cost of £60. At his death in 1609 Jones left £100 as endowment to the civic authorities, who were to have complete responsibility for the administration of the affairs of the establishment and its inmates.⁶²

Two almshouses were built and endowed in the county by generous donors in 1614. Henry Llewellyn, a gentleman of Wells, provided another endowed establishment for that town by the terms of his will proved in that year. The sum of £500 was vested in the municipal government, the income to be paid to the donor's father and mother during their lifetimes and then disposed for the erection and maintenance of an almshouse for the deserving poor of the town. In 1630, on the death of the surviving parent, the sum of £600 was provided by the executors to fulfil the purposes of the trust.⁶³ The second endowment was at Crewkerne, where Matthew Chubb, a Dorchester mer-

chant, and his wife, Margaret, built a house at a charge of about £100 for the shelter of seven poor persons from Crewkerne and one from the parish of Misterton, which they endowed with a capital gift of £100 entrusted to local feoffees.⁶⁴

A very rich and a devoutly Puritan London merchant, Richard Huish, was the greatest benefactor of the town of Taunton during our entire period. A member of a family long prominent in the mercantile affairs of Taunton, Huish left almost the whole of his liquid wealth to charity, including a large endowment for university scholarships which will be more fully noted in later pages.⁶⁵ His will, proved in 1616, is an almost classic Puritan document in its long affirmation of faith and in the stern injunctions laid on his executors. He required a simple and inexpensive funeral, marked by no vanity of mourning weeds, "and whereas" he had given "of long tyme earnest consideration" to the earthly things of which God had made him steward, that he might most worthily "for His glory discharge" his responsibilities, he had determined on the establishment and endowment of an almshouse in Taunton for the succor of thirteen impotent poor and aged men of that town. The buildings had been begun during his lifetime and were completed at a charge of perhaps £650. By will, Huish vested properties in Blackfriars, London, of a then value of £103 p.a., on sixteen trustees who were instructed to admit to the foundation poor unmarried laboring men from Taunton and the surrounding parishes, who possessed less than £2.10s. p.a. for their own sustenance. The almsmen were to be required to attend prayers three days each week and their tenure of charity was contingent on their forsaking playing at cards and dice and on keeping free of alehouses.⁶⁶

In the next year, 1617, a Dorset merchant, John Whetstone of Rodden, who also founded an almshouse at Dorchester with an endowment of £500, made very generous dispositions for Ilton, Somerset, where his mother (Margaret Bernard) had been born. He bequeathed the sum of £1,000 for the establishment of the almshouse at Ilton for the complete support of nine almspeople or as many families, though no family admitted was to exceed three persons in number. The vicar and eight other substantial men of the parish were to serve as trustees of the foundation and the

⁶⁰ PCC 33 Windebanck 1608 (John Still); *PP* 1820, 4: 348-351; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 388, 408, 590-591; Cooper, C. H., *Memorials of Cambridge* 2: 263, Cambridge, 1880; *Misc. gen. et her.*, n.s., 4: 83, 1884; *DNB*. Still had given £66.13s.4d. to Trinity College, Cambridge, during his lifetime, as well as £20 for the repair of Bath Abbey. His will bestowed an additional £30 on Trinity College, £20 to the poor of Wells, and £10 to the poor of Banwell, and a capital sum of £150 for the care of the poor of Hadleigh, Suffolk. Still, a native of Lincolnshire, had been Rector of Hadleigh in 1571 and his wife was a native of the town. He served as Master of Trinity College, being appointed in 1577, and was made Vice-Chancellor of the University in 1592. He was appointed to his bishopric in 1593. For his benefaction to Trinity College, *vide post*, 65.

⁶¹ *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 15: 136, 1900; Rogers, W. H., *Memorials of the West*, 147-172, Exeter, 1888; *Somersetshire Archaeological and Natural History Society Proceedings* 80: 9, 1935. *Vide post*, 65-66, for a discussion of Wadham's great educational foundation.

⁶² PCC 67 Dorset 1609; *New-England Hist. and Gen. Reg.* 81: 489, 1927.

⁶³ PCC 93 Lawe 1614; *PP* 1820, 4: 356.

⁶⁴ PCC 74 Weldon 1617 (Matthew Chubb); PCC 45 Barrington 1628 (Margaret Chubb); *PP* 1823, 9: 494-496; *PP* 1835, 21: 20-21; *PP* 1837, 23: 36; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 15: 67, 1900. The inscription placed on the building dates it as 1644, but this evidently is in error. The Chubbs also endowed and built almshouses in Shaftesbury, Dorset, and in Dorchester. The latter house was endowed in 1620 by an outright gift of £100 and £500 of a £1,000 debt due to Chubb from the King.

⁶⁵ *Vide post*, 67.

⁶⁶ PCC 72 Cope 1616; *PP* 1821, 12: 499-508; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 237-238; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 463; Toulmin, *Taunton*, 36-39.

householders of the community were to select two "of the better sort of people" for its actual administration. A rent-charge of £63.19s.11d. p.a. was purchased by the trustees in 1630 to secure the fulfilment of the trust.⁶⁷

A member of the large and powerful Paulet family, William Paulet of Beer, founded an almshouse at Stogursey for six women at a somewhat uncertain date. The first precise reference to the establishment is to be found in a feoffment in 1619, though it is probable that the actual date of the vesting of the property was somewhat earlier. The endowment consisted of six houses, a shop, orchard, and forty-one acres of land, a portion of which was urban, with a then capital value of £820, while a commodious almshouse had also been provided.⁶⁸ In the same year the largest of all these foundations was created at Bruton by the will of Hugh Sexey [Saxey] of London, a native of the town. Sexey, Auditor of the Household for Queen Elizabeth and James I, had for some years past been purchasing and renovating small cottages in the town for the use and succor of indigent persons whom he had supported by outright gifts. He had apparently become deeply interested in this form of philanthropy and bequeathed a large estate to his executors for the erection of an almshouse in Bruton, at a cost of approximately £600, and for the shelter and support of eighteen aged almspeople. He conveyed four manors in Somerset, the manor of Hackney in Middlesex, tenements in Gloucestershire, and other lands with a total capital value probably in excess of £4,400, to self-perpetuating trustees.⁶⁹ The governance of the foundation was entrusted to the schoolmaster, the bailiff, the constables, the churchwardens, and the overseers of the poor of the town.⁷⁰

Still another almshouse was built and endowed, with a capital of about £200, at Ilton in *ca.* 1621 by John Wyndham, who came into the Merifield estate of the Wadhams on the death, without issue, of Sir Nicholas Wadham's widow in 1618.⁷¹ A few years later, before his death in 1624, Sir Edward Hext built an almshouse for eight persons in Somerton, to which he bequeathed the generous endowment of £1,000 for its support. His able widow, Dionis Hext, who was also his executor, completed his foundation and established its orders during the nine years remaining to her. Support was to be afforded to eight almspeople drawn from Somerton, High Ham, Nether Ham, and Langport, while the trust was vested, on Lady Hext's death in 1633, in the owner of the Hext manor house to-

⁶⁷ PCC 80 Weldon, 1617; *PP* 1826, 13: 339-340. (*Vide post*, 66, for the Dorchester bequest.) *Vide post*, 66.

⁶⁸ *PP* 1826, 13: 365-369.

⁶⁹ The clear income was "well over" £200 p.a. in 1618; in 1870 it stood at £821.4s.4d. In 1877 a girls' school was founded by the trustees, several other schools were later assisted, and a trade school was likewise built from surplus income.

⁷⁰ PCC 81 Parker, 1619; *PP* 1824, 14: 366-380; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (2): 211-212; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 464.

⁷¹ PCC 109 Scroope 1630; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (2): 48-50.

gether with two of the justices of the peace in the neighborhood.⁷²

A native of Donyatt, John Dunster, a great cloth-worker of London, built an almshouse at a cost of about £100 in his native town during the late years of his life. On his death in 1625 Dunster left £340 to the poor of four Somerset parishes, £100 as a loan fund for poor artisans of Bristol, and £20 to the clergy of Somerset, as well as completing his almshouse foundation.⁷³ His executors were required to convey to eleven named feoffees the sum of £500, to which £200 was added from the residue, for the full and proper maintenance of three poor men and as many almswomen in his house. The selection of the almspeople was entrusted to the parson, the churchwardens, and the overseers of the parish.⁷⁴

The amazing flow of these benefactions to secure the foundation of almshouses for the relief of the unemployable poor continued without abatement during the early years of Charles I's reign. For the years 1627-1638 six foundations or substantial augmentations have been recorded. The first was the settlement by deed of an endowment of an estimated £400 on trustees by Sir Richard Grobham in 1627 for the support of an almshouse which he had recently built in the center of Bishop's Lydeard. Accommodations were afforded for eight almspeople, a constitution for the government of the institution was arranged, and orders announced "for the relief, livelihood, maintenance and comfort" of the poor people to be housed.⁷⁵

The poor of Taunton were further relieved by the building there of eleven cottage almshouses by Andrew

⁷² PCC 38 Byrde 1624, admon. September 20, 1633 ("rel. Dionis decd."); Collinson, *Somerset* 1: xxxviii; *ibid.* 3: 182, 185, 188, 445; *PP* 1824, 14: 461-466, 490; Watson, W. G. W., *Chronological history of Somerset*, 122, London, Folk Press, 1925; Pevsner, *South Somerset*, 223. *Vide post*, 73. Accounted one of the ablest men of his time, Sir Edward Hext served Somerset and the realm in various public and private ways. Knight of the shire in several parliaments, a conscientious and active justice of the peace, he was appointed Sheriff of Somerset in 1608. He built a famous house at Low Ham as well as a chapel where he was buried. For his important report to Lord Burghley in 1596 on the problem of poverty in Somerset, *vide* Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 91-92, 94.

⁷³ Dunster's charities totaled £3,420, including £500 for university scholarships and £500 for church building and church repairs. *Vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 113, 148, 302, 341, 358, 418, for a discussion of his other bequests. Members of his family were yeomen and husbandmen in the vicinity of Donyatt.

⁷⁴ PCC 147 Clarke 1625; *PP* 1826, 13: 329; S.P.Dom. 1628, CXXI: 58. The trustees petitioned the Crown in 1628, finding to their dismay that the lands forming the endowment were held in knight's fee and that the hospital could not be legally founded unless the King would extinguish the tenure. On the advice of the Attorney-General, this was arranged.

⁷⁵ PCC 68 Ridley 1629; *PP* 1826, 13: 394-395. Grobham also founded by will an almshouse for the poor of Great Wishford, Wiltshire, where he was lord of the manor (*PP* 1833, 19: 505-507).

Henley, probably a retired London merchant, some years before 1631. On his death in that year Henley left the sum of £4.8s. to be paid during one year after his death for the certainly inadequate support of three indigent persons.⁷⁶ But it seems clear that he had arranged with his widow for the enlargement of his charity and its endowment. This woman, Dorothy Henley, in 1637, increased the number of accommodations to eighteen. Two properties of uncertain value were said to have been settled as endowment for the institution, but it is evident that the endowment was at once inadequate and imperfectly constituted, since all financial support had disappeared when the buildings were razed in the late eighteenth century.⁷⁷

In 1634 the endowment of the almshouse at Glastonbury received a considerable augmentation by the gift of a rent-charge of £6.2s.6d. p.a. made by Roger Nightingale, a clergyman, and his wife. It appears that the wife had insisted in articles of agreement drawn before her marriage that the gift should be made, a covenant which the husband fulfilled by vesting £120 in trustees for the purchase of the rent-charge.⁷⁸ A few years later, in 1638, a woolen draper of Wells, Walter Brick, built an almshouse for four poor men of that city, endowing it with lands worth £370. Each of his almsmen was to have £5.4s. p.a. for sustenance, as well as free fuel and a gown costing 12s. every second year, though it is difficult to believe that the settled endowment could have supplied the revenues required to meet the founder's wishes.⁷⁹

The last of the almshouse foundations made in the early Stuart period was that of Robert Gray, a rich and most generous London merchant tailor. Before he died (1635), Gray had built in Taunton, his birthplace, a house suitable for the reception of ten poor women and six poor men at a cost of about £600, including £80 which he had paid to Sir William Portman for the site. By his will, not proved until 1638, he settled £2,000 of endowment on the Company of Merchant Taylors of London as trustees for the support of his almspeople, each of whom was to have annually £4.16s. for maintenance. Provision was also made for a stipend of £6.13s.4d. p.a. for a reader who should say prayers in the chapel of the building and who should also undertake to teach ten poor children of the town to read and write. The company having declined the administration of the trust, the endowment was accordingly paid over to feoffees, who with the governor of the almshouse undertook the responsibility for its affairs.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ PCC 6 St. John 1631; Brown, *Wills* 1: 14.

⁷⁷ PP 1821, 12: 519-520; Toulmin, *Taunton*, 39-40. Dorothy Henley died in 1651. We have been unable to find any record of her will or of a deed of gift.

⁷⁸ PP 1824, 14: 406.

⁷⁹ PP 1837-38, 26: 749-750; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 408; Holmes, *Wells and Glastonbury*, 150.

⁸⁰ PCC 150 Lee 1638; PP 1821, 12: 522-528; Savage, James, ed., *Toulmin's history of Taunton*, 213-218, Taunton, 1822;

In the brief period from 1601 to 1640, the great sum of £21,898.17s. was given for the support of almshouses in Somerset, in a bold attack on the problem of indigence. Sixteen substantial new almshouse foundations were made in the interval, not to mention the considerable augmentations of endowments of existing institutions; together these accounted for £16,579 of the total, this sum being vested as capital. Through the generosity of the donors, 190 almsmen were to be maintained on these new foundations or augmentations, as well as perhaps 80 supported on foundations made earlier than 1601. In addition to this impressive sum for endowment, £5,319.17s. was given in Somerset in the early Stuart period for other almshouse purposes, such as the cost of the buildings erected, small augmentations of existing endowments, and funds made available for the support of a number of unendowed almshouses which have not been at this point included in our reckoning. These foundations were well spread across the county, they had enlisted the generous support of men and women of all classes, and they had gone far towards alleviating that distress of body and spirit which had for so long been the concomitant of indigence. It must always be remembered that the almshouse in the seventeenth century carried no stigma for its occupants; that nominations were earnestly sought by the poor and carefully ordered by the governors; and that this movement was a hopeful and a most important experiment in the mitigation of human suffering and misery.

The dislocation of the Civil War, severe in Somerset, by no means ended the great movement for the foundation of almshouses which had begun in 1608. In 1641 William Helyer, a clergyman, erected a large almshouse for twelve poor in East Coker consisting of separate units, each with two rooms and a garden. Helyer, who was also lord of the manor, built the institution near his own manor house and supported it by direct gifts until his death in 1645. His will provided an endowment of considerable landed property, then worth approximately £550, for the perpetual maintenance of the institution, which was to provide

Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 238; Esdaile, K. A., *English church monuments*, 133, London, Batsford, 1946. Gray's epitaph in St. Mary Magdalene Church, Taunton, should perhaps be quoted:

Taunton bore him, London bred him:
Piety trained him: virtue led him:
Earth enrich'd him: Heav'n carest him:
Taunton blest him: London blest him:
This thankful town, that mindful city
Share his piety and his pity.
What he gave, and how he gave it,
Ask the poor, and you shall have it.
Gentle reader, Heaven may strike
Thy tender heart to do the like.
Now thine eyes have read the story,
Give him the praise, and God the glory.

For his charities in London and in Yorkshire, *vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 157, 363.

complete care for needy men and women who must be natives of the parish.⁸¹ At about the same time Sir William Portman, of Orchard Portman, erected a commodious almshouse in Staple Fitzpaine at a cost of upwards of £110 for the benefit of honest but indigent persons to be drawn from Orchard Portman, Staple Fitzpaine, Bickenhall, and Thurlbear. In 1643 Portman vested in twelve trustees a rent-charge of £40 p.a. laid on his manors of "Staple and Bicknell" for the permanent support of six almspeople. The selection was to remain in the hands of his heirs, and that failing was to be entrusted to the minister and churchwardens of Staple Fitzpaine.⁸²

The third almshouse to be endowed by the rich and persistently generous Poulet family was established in 1649 under the will of John Poulett, first Baron Poulett. Poulett's will recites the fact that there was already a scantily endowed almshouse at Hinton St. George, providing succor for only four persons and with a maintenance of only 10d. per week for each inmate. He had recently built lodgings for two additional almspeople and by bequest provided sufficient endowment to ensure each of the six almsmen, who should henceforward be maintained, the sum of £2.12s. p.a. for more adequate support.⁸³

At about the same time a mariner of Minehead, Robert Quirck, by will completed the foundation of a large almshouse for his native town. As early as 1637 Quirck had purchased a suitable site for his institution at a cost of £13 and had built at a charge of almost £200 an almshouse with accommodations for eleven persons. Quirck maintained the property and provided for the almsmen during the remainder of his lifetime. His will, proved in 1649, bequeathed as endowment two warehouses on the quay at Minehead of an estimated capital value of £240 and provided as well £200 to be invested in land for the further augmentation of the income of the house. Quirck inscribed over the

⁸¹ *PP* 1824, 13: 575-583; Foster, Joseph, ed., *Alumni oxonienses* 2: 69, Oxford, 1891. Helyer was a native of Devon, where, after taking his M.A. at Oxford in 1577, he held a number of livings until his death in 1645 at a great age. He was made Canon of Exeter in 1596 and Archdeacon of Barnstaple in 1605. He was also chaplain to Queen Elizabeth and a fellow of Chelsea College.

⁸² *PCC* 146 Essex 1648; *Cokayne*, G. E., ed., *Complete baronetage* 1: 90, Exeter, Pollard, 1900; *PP* 1821, 12: 477-478; *PP* 1826, 13: 340-342; *PP* 1837, 23: 19; Sixsmith, R. A., *Staple Fitzpaine and the Forest of Neroche*, 45-46, Taunton, Mounter, 1958; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (2): 61 (where the account of the charity is badly confused). *Vide post*, 76, for biographical particulars.

⁸³ *PCC* 45 Fairfax 1649; *PP* 1823, 9: 500-501; *DNB*; *Complete peerage* 6: 282, 1895. Lord Poulett (1586-1649) was the grandson of Sir Amias Poulet. Educated at Oxford and the Middle Temple, he had served in Parliament for Somerset in 1610 and 1614 and sat for Lyme Regis in 1621. He was elevated to the peerage in 1627. He supported the Parliamentary cause until the passage of the Militia Ordinance, when he withdrew from Parliament and joined the King. He was twice captured, but was set free on both occasions.

door of his building a curse against any man who might convert the property to any use other than the succor of the poor and carved just underneath the motto: "God's providence/Is my inheritance. R. Q."⁸⁴

A great London merchant, Alexander Stafford, who was a native of Frome, by his will, proved in 1652, re-established a medieval almshouse in that town which apparently had long since languished for want of endowment. The bequest provided a rent-charge, laid on extensive London properties, of £28 p.a. for the sole benefit and perpetual relief of fourteen poor women who should be fully maintained in "the almshouse situate near the Great Bridge," which was also placed under the control of trustees named by Stafford's will. An additional £2 p.a. was provided, of which £1.10s. was for the vicar for two sermons each year and the remaining 10s. for the vicar and the trustees on the occasion of the annual audit of the almshouse accounts.⁸⁵

Stafford's bequest concludes the record of the substantial foundations made during our period, though another almshouse, albeit small and unendowed, was built in Somerset in 1656, and two augmentations totaling £87 were made to existing endowments in 1659, by benefactors of the county. From the time of the first foundation at Glastonbury in 1512, a total of thirty-one well-vested and suitably endowed almshouses had been established in the county. When the seven surviving medieval foundations, four of which were substantially assisted by Stuart benefactors, are added, we may assume that there were in 1660 at least thirty-eight endowed almshouses serving the needs of the poor of the county. A total of £21,992 of funds had been vested in their endowment during our period and they provided shelter and maintenance for at least 311 indigent persons. This would suggest, if 5 per cent may be taken as the prevailing rate of interest, that the probably adequate average stipend of £3.10s.9d. p.a. was available for the care of their charges.⁸⁶ In addition, a total of £2,216.5s. had been given or bequeathed to small and inadequately endowed almshouses in eleven parishes, which probably means that an additional thirty-two persons were being supported in these establishments. A total of £4,701 had been given for the construction or repair of almshouses, while £504.8s. had been given during our period for immediate use in these institutions.

In all, then, it seems certain that at least 343

⁸⁴ *PCC* 33 Fairfax 1649; *PP* 1826, 13: 381-382; Collinson, *Somerset* 2: 30-32.

⁸⁵ *PCC* 183 Bowyer 1652; *PP* 1820, 4: 320. Stafford desired to be buried at Harlow, Essex, near his wife; in that parish he had established an almshouse foundation for three almswomen. His will likewise provided £1,440 for an almshouse for ten poor men and women in London (*vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 162, 366).

⁸⁶ This may be compared with £ 4.8s.7d. in Buckinghamshire; £ 3.9s.7d. in Hampshire; £ 3.0s.8d. in Worcestershire; and £ 1.16s. in Lancashire.

almspeople were being wholly supported in well-endowed, carefully settled, and responsibly administered almshouses founded or financed during the period under review. We have previously noted that almost exactly the same number of families (344) were being cared for in their own houses by direct relief made possible by the charity of private benefactors of the county.⁸⁷ This is indeed a proud record, and it seems certain that private generosity and the assumption of responsibility by men and women of all classes for the alleviation of the social curse of poverty had at last driven from the county the grim and hopeless poverty which had marked the early Tudor period.

2. SOCIAL REHABILITATION

The vigorous and imaginative benefactors in the England of our period were interested not only in the direct relief of the unemployable poor, of the aged, and of the infirm, but likewise in various experiments for the rehabilitation of the poor and in providing opportunities which would prevent as well as cure poverty. Somerset lagged behind in these pioneer efforts, doubtless because it possessed no strong mercantile aristocracy and because its towns were relatively unimportant in this period.⁸⁸ In all, only £3,101.2s. was given for the several uses we have grouped under the head of social rehabilitation, or merely 2.66 per cent of the whole of the charities of the period, standing in most striking contrast to the 10 per cent provided for such uses by Bristol's donors. Very small amounts indeed were given for the relief or release of prisoners, while only £164.12s. was provided for marriage portions, which in most counties had a quite special appeal to the gentry.

A total of £509.3s. was left for the establishment of apprenticeship schemes in the county, though the largest of these was never endowed and hence has not been counted in our totals.⁸⁹ One or two of these foundations might be mentioned. Lady Dionis Hext in 1633 left £100 as a stock, the interest to be employed for binding out poor and promising children of the parish of High Ham.⁹⁰ Another woman donor, Margaret Barkham, the widow of a Wells merchant, in 1654 in connection with her foundation of a grammar school in that town, arranged that the surplus income, amounting to approximately £10 p.a., should be employed for the apprenticeship in some trade of the aptest students in her school, with stipends of from £3 to £4 for each

on entrance into his bonds.⁹¹ These were the largest of the endowed apprenticeship schemes which, we may suppose, could not have financed more than about eight apprenticeships for the whole county each year by the close of our period.

A considerably larger sum was accumulated with which to provide workhouses and to set the poor on work. In all £803.11s. was given for this purpose. The first of these funds, with a capital of £40, was established shortly after Elizabeth's accession. The second was created by the will of a clergyman, Robert Darche, who in 1574 left £66.13s.4d. as a stock for the parish of Cutcombe, the capital to be used for setting the poor at work on the making of linen.⁹² A gentleman of Merriott, James Hooper, bequeathed £100 for the purpose of providing the poor of that parish with useful work, though the benefaction was later employed as capital, the income being used for direct poor relief.⁹³ In 1631 Edmund Stirridge of Bath left £50 to endow a workhouse there,⁹⁴ while a decade later George Joyce, a gentleman of Evercreech, provided £100 as a stock for the employment of the poor.⁹⁵

The donors of Somerset were interested more persistently in the establishment of loan funds for poor but promising tradesmen and artisans than in any other experiment in social rehabilitation. A total of £877 of capital was supplied for this purpose by numerous donors in gifts beginning in 1554 and continuing in almost every decade until the close of our period. The first of these foundations was made by a moderately wealthy clergyman, Richard Brampton, who, in addition to a bequest of £60 for the general uses of Wells Cathedral and an outright bequest of 3s.4d. to the poor of the almshouses of Wells, left to the town £100 to be used in loans to "ten yonge occupiers" (tradesmen). The sum of £10 was to be lent to each on surety for a period of two years without interest and then to be collected and lent to other young men on the same terms.⁹⁶ A generation later Alexander Every, a London clothier whose almshouse foundation has already been mentioned, created loan funds of £50 each in Taunton and Ilminster as well as in Axminster, Devon.⁹⁷ These are but typical of some twelve small endowments funded during our period for the assistance of young men, possessing no capital resources, who had just completed their apprenticeships and who were ready to enter upon their trades. Not infrequently, a moderate rate of interest was exacted which was to be payable to the poor, while various devices were im-

⁸⁷ *Vide ante*, 52.
⁸⁸ Even in such rural counties as Buckinghamshire, Hampshire, Lancashire, and Worcestershire the proportion left by donors for this purpose ranged from 3.04 per cent (Lancashire) to 5.94 per cent (Worcestershire). *Vide ante* 31, n. 107, for further particulars.

⁸⁹ This was the benefaction of Sir William Portman (*vide ante*, 58), described more fully in later pages (*vide post*, 76).
⁹⁰ *PP* 1824, 14: 490. *Vide ante*, 56.

⁹¹ *PP* 1820, 4: 361-362; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 401. *Vide post*, 64.

⁹² *PCC* 43 Martyn 1574.
⁹³ *PCC* 13 Lewyn 1598; *PP* 1823, 9: 501; *Brown, Wills* 2: 104.

⁹⁴ *PCC* 82 St. John 1631, 79 Audley 1632.
⁹⁵ *PCC* 54 Evelyn 1641; *Brown, Wills* 2: 110.

⁹⁶ *PCC* F.8 More 1554; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 153-154, 1905.

⁹⁷ *Vide ante*, 54.

cluded in the deeds of gift to ensure the repayment of the loans.

We should mention as well the beginnings made during our period in the creation of hospitals, in the modern sense, for the cure of the sick and the rehabilitation of helpless poor persons. As one would expect, in Somerset this most interesting development was stimulated by the magic of the waters at Bath, where there had been several medieval institutions rather imperfectly constituted to lend aid to the ill. In all, the sum of £716.13s. was given by various donors for this purpose during the years under study, and we shall want to comment on at least the principal of these endowments.

John Cantlow, Prior of Bath at the close of the fifteenth century (1489-1499), rebuilt the medieval Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen near Bath in *ca.* 1490 for the care of lepers, as well as a small hospital adjoining for the confinement of lunatics, which he endowed with lands valued, a half-century later, at £5 p.a.⁹⁸ This foundation, unmolested by the Reformation, was to serve as trustee for another hospital built and endowed by John Feckenham, the last Abbot of Westminster. This clergyman, whose piety was fully matched by his charity, "relieved the poor wheresoever he came. So that flies flock not thicker about spilt honey than beggars constantly crowded about him."⁹⁹ He declined to conform under Elizabeth and was deposed, being released from the Tower to the friendly custody of Richard Cox, Bishop of Ely. Suffering from ill health in 1575, he was permitted by the Privy Council to repair to Bath to take the waters under the care of a renowned physician, Dr. Sherwood. He was appalled to discover that there were only scant facilities for the care of poor patients and thereupon caused a small bath and hospital to be built at his own charge for seven patients, which he vested with an endowment of £120, naming as trustee the Hospital of St. Mary Magdalen.¹⁰⁰

Thomas Bellott, for some time steward of the royal household and a friend of Lord Burghley, was almost equally famous for his generosity, having prior to his death in 1611 disposed of almost the whole of his estate to charities. Bellott was most generous to Somerset, where he probably resided at the time of his death, though he was a native of Cheshire and had spent most of his active career in London. In about 1570 he had subscribed £300 towards the conversion of the abbey church at Bath into a great parish church and had likewise secured contributions for this under-

⁹⁸ Collinson, *Somerset* 1: 56; *PP* 1822, 9: 555-558; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 80; Baddeley, M. J. B., *Bath and Bristol*, 55, London, Ward, Lock, 1902; Davis, C. E., *Ancient landmarks of Bath*, 46, Bath, 1864. *Vide post*, 73.

⁹⁹ Fuller, Thomas, *The church history of Britain* 3: 80, London, 1837.

¹⁰⁰ PCC 29 Watson 1584; Gasquet, F. A., *Abbot Feckenham and Bath, Dowsdale Review* 25: 242-260, 1906; *DNB*.

taking from friends all over England. Some time before his death in 1611 he purchased a large house in Bath and converted it, at a cost of £200, into a hospital for the relief and lodging of poor, diseased persons who might be benefited by the use of the waters. Shortly afterwards he conveyed to the municipal authorities an estate of £300 as an endowment, with the provision that not more than twelve patients were to be admitted at any one time, that no patient might be accepted for more than twenty-eight days in any year, and that each was to have an allowance of 4d. *per diem* if required. Applicants for admission were to present a certificate from a justice of the peace, their clergyman, or the churchwardens of their parish, attesting at once to their poverty and their illness. A married couple were to be resident to administer the affairs of the foundation, while £1 p.a. was to be paid from the income of the trust to a surgeon who would admit and care for the patients.¹⁰¹

Further provision was made in 1652 for the treatment of poor patients at Bath by the wishes of Lady Elizabeth Scudamore, wife of Viscount Scudamore. Scudamore, following the directions of his wife, who had died in 1651, by an indenture conveyed to the municipal authorities of Bath, as trustee, £220 for the purchase of an annuity of £10. Of this income, £2 was to be paid for the annual dinner of the mayor and aldermen and £8 for the services of a physician, to be named by the mayor and aldermen, who should at no charge give his counsel to all poor persons coming to the baths for the cure of their diseases.¹⁰²

3. MUNICIPAL BETTERMENTS

If the sums provided for the various experiments in social rehabilitation in Somerset were meager, the gifts and endowments established for municipal improvements can only be described as negligible. In all, only £905.15s. was given for these various uses during the whole of our long period. This amounts to no more than 0.78 per cent of the total of the charities of the county; Somerset, among all the counties comprehended in this study, is to be compared only with Lancashire in the slender proportion given for this group of purposes.¹⁰³ Thus nothing was provided

¹⁰¹ PCC 81 Wood 1611; *PP* 1820, 5: 292-295; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (1): 43-44, 59, 63; *DNB*. *Vide post*, 74.

¹⁰² *PP* 1820, 5: 297; *Complete peerage* 7: 97, 1896; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (1): 44-45. Lady Scudamore was the daughter and heir of Sir Arthur Porter of Lanthon, near Gloucester. Scudamore, a native of Herefordshire, was created a baronet in 1620 and was raised to the Irish peerage in 1628. He was in Parliament in 1621-1625 and in 1628-1629, and in 1634 served as Ambassador to France. An active Royalist, he was taken prisoner, his houses plundered and burned, and his estates sequestrated.

¹⁰³ The proportions for the other counties are: Bristol, 9.10 per cent; Buckinghamshire, 8.80 per cent; Hampshire, 10.92 per cent; Kent, 4.59 per cent; Lancashire, 1.22 per cent; Lon-

for public parks and recreation, only £31 was given to companies for the public benefit, and the very small total of £321.6s. was designated for the general uses of the municipalities of the county. Rather more, £553.9s. in all, was provided for the roads, bridges, causeways, and harbors of this large county, but even this represented only 0.47 per cent of the whole of the benefactions of Somerset donors. It seems all too clear that the ardent concern of the donors of the county with the needs of the poor and their generous support of education were carried forward at the expense of experiments in social rehabilitation and to the neglect of municipal betterments.

4. EDUCATION

Somewhat more than a fourth of all Somerset's charities were given for building the educational institutions of the county. The very considerable total of £30,158.7s. was provided for the various educational uses during our entire period, amounting to 25.88 per cent of all charitable funds for the county. This proportion compares most favorably with that in the other counties in England, save for the overwhelming interest displayed by Lancashire in the foundation of a complete system of grammar-school education. The sum of £9,902.5s., of which almost the whole (99.51 per cent) was capital, was given by donors for the foundation of schools or the augmentation of existing grammar-school endowments, this amounting to 8.50 per cent of the charities of the county.¹⁰⁴ The large total of £16,495.12s., or 14.16 per cent of all benefactions, was given for university endowments, most of which was accounted for by one great collegiate foundation. The considerable sum of £3,655.10s. for scholarship endowments, given by many donors, was vested to carry forward grammar-school education into the universities, while a small endowment of £105 was given for non-university libraries.

When our period opened, the county was provided with only one functioning grammar school, and it was unendowed. The cathedral school at Wells was of ancient foundation, though the first documentary references to its work occur in the latter part of the twelfth century. It is certain that the school was in the charge of a full-time master as early as 1229 and that it was supported from the general revenues of the cathedral church. New quarters were provided in the early fifteenth century and it had attained a considerable enrollment and reputation by the close of that century. The chantry survey of 1548 revealed that it possessed no endowment, since the "Deane and Chappiture of their ffree will kepe and maynteyne" the school

don, 4.95 per cent; Norfolk, 10.58 per cent; Worcestershire, 5.44 per cent; Yorkshire, 2.51 per cent.

¹⁰⁴ It should be said that we are interested in all school foundations, whether elementary or secondary. We shall on occasion use the term "grammar schools" somewhat loosely.

and assumed full responsibility for the stipends of £13.6s.8d. and £6.13s.4d. paid to the master and usher respectively. The foundation was not molested during the upheaval of the Reformation and was continued at the charge of the cathedral chapter, with the aid of numerous, though small, gifts and bequests from residents of the town.¹⁰⁵

There had likewise been a school at Bridgwater at a very early date, since in 1298 the Prior of St. John's Hospital bound himself to maintain thirteen poor scholars to whom instruction would be offered in grammar. But this foundation seems to have lapsed in the fifteenth century, for the Chantry Commissioners imply in their report the great concern of the inhabitants that no school was available for their young.¹⁰⁶ A school was likewise maintained at Ilminster for a time during the fifteenth century which was, however, unendowed and which had languished prior to the opening of our period.¹⁰⁷ There is as well fragmentary evidence that imperfectly organized chantry schools had existed in two, possibly three, other communities which had, however, lapsed in their work well before the commissioners made their careful survey of the almost innumerable chantry foundations in this county. Somerset was, then, very poorly served by schools at the close of the Middle Ages. The tradition of popular and endowed grammar-school education had of necessity to be built slowly as our period progressed.

The first of the modern foundations was made at Crewkerne by John de Combe in 1498. Combe transferred to trustees seven cottages and sixty scattered acres of land, possessing a capital value of perhaps £240, as an endowment for the school. He stipulated that the endowment provided should be employed for the maintenance of roads and bridges in the town in the event the trustees failed to carry forward his intentions. Six of the most discreet laymen of Crewkerne were to serve as trustees and it seems clear that they instituted the school shortly after Combe's death in 1499. The Chantry Commissioners, a half-century later, found that the school was taught by John Byrde, a man "of honest conversaçon well lerned and of goodly judgement," who was rendering a great service by teaching from 120 to 140 students. His stipend from the school's endowment was about £8 p.a., and the commissioners recommended that the institution be not molested and that its revenues be continued.¹⁰⁸

An even more substantial foundation of a free gram-

¹⁰⁵ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 435-438; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 163, 1888.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.* 2: 57, 1888; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 446-447.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.* 2: 451.

¹⁰⁸ Bartelot, R. G., *History of Crewkerne School*, Crewkerne, 1899; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 453-454; *PP* 1823, 9: 477-483; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 7, 178, 1888; Leach, A. F., *English schools at the Reformation*, pt. 2: 192, London, 1896. Combe was appointed vicar of the church at Crewkerne in 1472. He became treasurer of Exeter Cathedral in 1486, its precentor in 1488.

mar school for his native Bruton was made in 1519 by Richard Fitz James, Bishop of London, and his nephew John, who in that year had been appointed Attorney-General. It seems possible that the founders had for some years past been maintaining a school at Bruton from their own funds. The Fitz Jameses transferred to the Abbot of Bruton, as trustee, lands and other real property with a value probably in excess of £800, under extremely careful restrictions and trust provisions. The Abbot undertook to build a suitable schoolhouse within ten years and bound himself to pay £10 p.a. to a schoolmaster who should maintain a free school where grammar should be taught according to the new form used at Magdalen College, Oxford, or at St. Paul's School, London. No "small thyngs" such as singing or reading of psalters and matins should be taught, it being rather the founders' intention that a rigorous education in Latin should be provided for all boys, rich and poor, who might present themselves for an education. The school properties were confiscated with the expropriation of the abbey, but in 1547, on the petition of the inhabitants to the Chantry Commissioners, the case was reviewed. It appeared that the schoolmaster had been pensioned and had gained possession of the schoolhouse and the land adjoining, but had refused "eny further ffree teaching or keping of scole ther." Great harm, it was said, had consequently ensued to the town and to "the hole contrie." The inhabitants accordingly petitioned for the restitution of the foundation, and by royal patent dated 1550 the property was restored and the school re-founded under royal charter with an annual income of £12 p.a., local trustees being vested with full authority for the administration of its affairs.¹⁰⁹

The free grammar school at Taunton was founded in 1523 by Richard Fox, Bishop of Winchester, the manor and hundred of Taunton being part of the possessions of that See. Though there is clear evidence of a thirteenth-century school in Taunton, it seems certain that it had decayed and that there was no endowed foundation in the town for at least two centuries before Fox's benefaction. This great churchman and statesman in 1523 appropriated £226.5s.10d. from his revenues for the building of the school within the precincts of the Castle and maintained a suitable schoolmaster in the establishment until his death in 1528.¹¹⁰ The stipend of the master and of an usher,

¹⁰⁹ PCC 3 Ayliffe 1522 (Richard Fitz James); PCC 5 Spert 1542 (John Fitz James); *VCH, Somerset* 2: 449-450 (a full and interesting account); *PP* 1824, 14: 380-391; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 131-132, 1888; Brodrick, G. C., *Memorials of Merton College* 16: 161-162, Oxford, 1885; *DNB*. *Vide* Jordan, *Charities of London*, 256, 277, 399, for the Bishop's benefactions to London. *Vide post*, 65, for his gifts to Merton College.

¹¹⁰ *PP* 1821, 12: 485-486; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 239; Savage, *Taunton*, 195-197; Cassan, S. H., *Lives of the Bishops of Bath and Wells*, 270, London, 1829; *VCH, Somerset* 2:

for the school had grown in numbers to about 140 students, was then undertaken by a local merchant, Roger Hill, who for about twelve years appears to have contributed £18 p.a. to their support. Hill died in 1546, leaving £120 for prayers, £100 to the poor of Taunton, and £3.19s. for various church purposes, but established no endowment for the grammar school.¹¹¹ Two years later (1548) the inhabitants took advantage of the visit of the Chantry Commissioners to file with them an eloquent petition setting out the fact that since Hill's death the school "standyth voyde, w'tout either Mr, ussher or scolers, to the great piudice hurte and discomoditie of the comen welthe of the saide shire," though the "scolehowse . . . is the most bewtyfull and most necessarie place of all that shire." The petition concluded with the request that some endowment be assigned for the institution, the implication being that it should be taken from confiscated chantry properties.¹¹²

The Crown did not comply with this fervent petition, but the school seems nonetheless to have been resumed shortly afterwards. The much-needed endowment for this large and centrally situated school was supplied very soon (1554) under the will of William Walbye, a fellow in Fox's new foundation at Oxford, Corpus Christi College. A native of Taunton, Walbye left £50 to the poor there, £20 for the marriage of poor maidens, £20 for poor scholars at Oxford and as much for the repair of roads near the university city, as well as his bequest to the endowment of the school. Walbye instructed his executors to purchase lands with an annual value of £13.6s.8d. for the support of Taunton Free Grammar School, the eight trustees to include Sir William Portman (the Lord Chief Justice),¹¹³ the Warden of New College, Oxford, the President of Corpus Christi College, and two members of the Hill family residing in Taunton.¹¹⁴

In 1543 a London clergyman, George Wyndham, Precentor of St. Paul's and Archdeacon of Norwich, by will left a generous endowment of £420 for the

444; *DNB*. Fox (1448-1528) had served Henry Tudor in exile and after the victory at Bosworth Field was appointed Secretary of State, Lord Privy Seal, and (in 1487) Bishop of Exeter. He was translated to Bath and Wells in 1492, to Durham in 1494, and to Winchester in 1501. He was Chancellor of Cambridge, 1507-1519. He was a principal benefactor of Magdalen College, Oxford, and of Pembroke College, Cambridge, and was the founder of Corpus Christi College, Oxford. His charities in Somerset included a gift to Glastonbury Abbey as well as the building of Taunton Grammar School. *Vide post*, 69.

¹¹¹ *Vide ante*, 50. Hill left charities totaling £ 573.19s., his income gifts of about £ 200 to the grammar school being included, and a residue of upwards of £ 1,000. This was a very large estate for a provincial merchant at this early date.

¹¹² *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 25, 1888.

¹¹³ *Vide post*, 76.

¹¹⁴ PCC 19 More 1554; *PP* 1821, 12: 485-487; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 445; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 157-158, 1905; Toulmin, *Taunton*, 33.

foundation of a free grammar school in the parish of "Stooke" (Stogumber?). Lay trustees were designated, including Sir Edmund Wyndham and "Master" John Wyndham of Orchard-Wyndham (in St. Decuman's parish) to carry out the terms of the bequest. A master and an usher were to be appointed with stipends of £12 p.a. and £8 p.a. respectively to offer instruction without any charge to all acceptable students from the community.¹¹⁵

The free grammar school at Ilminster was founded in 1549 by local benefactors who purchased at most reasonable charges a portion of the rich chantry of St. Katherine's in that parish. Leach has shown conclusively that there was a grammar school at Ilminster as early as 1440, probably in connection with the chantry, which was the foundation of John Wadham. But there is no evidence in the chantry returns, and the commissioners were meticulous in such matters, that any one of the four priests celebrating in the church at Ilminster had held a school for some years before the visitation of 1547. In 1549 arrangements were made by which Humphrey Walrond, a Master of Chancery, and Henry Greenfield purchased for the sum of £126 properties which a generation later were worth approximately £16 p.a., with the undertaking to found a free grammar school in the parish. These properties were in the same year transferred to trustees who agreed to provide a schoolmaster of "good behaviour, name and fame and conversation" to instruct without charge all youths who might be brought to him. One of the chantry priests was first employed as master at a stipend of £7 p.a. The school prospered, the building being considerably repaired and enlarged in 1584. Meanwhile the properties constituting its endowment increased substantially in value, while unexpended income accumulated. With the accumulations of £280, including small bequests totaling £61.7s., additional land was purchased in 1606 as endowment, while in 1609 the trustees purchased the manor of Sandwich (Dorset) for the sum of £666.13s.4d. Reckoning the original endowment at the certainly low sum of £320, this suggests that by 1609 the capital of the school had reached the most respectable total of £1,266.13s.4d. The ever-prudent trustees, who had been well schooled by the thrifty Walrond until his death in 1580, were evidently still accumulating income, for a valuable house was purchased in Taunton in 1620 and scattered lands were acquired in 1632 with balances of £152.5s.4d. A writing master was added to the faculty of the school in 1655, while facilities were opened at about the same time for the elementary education of children. The remarkable history of the school suggests what could be accomplished from relatively small beginnings when able and responsible

¹¹⁵ PCC 23 Spert 1543; Brown, *Wills*, 6: 104-105. Though the testator's wish was clear and the will valid, there is no certain indication that this school was ever founded.

men of a community lent their best efforts and prudent care over a period of years.¹¹⁶

The free grammar school at Bath was chartered and endowed in 1552. It is possible that the rich monastery in that city may have provided some extramural educational opportunities during the Middle Ages, but certainly none was available for the city when this foundation, with gross revenues of £707.3s.1d. p.a., was dissolved in 1539. In 1552 the city formally laid a petition before the King asking that some portion of the revenues of the late monastic foundation be set aside for the support of a free grammar school for the community. In this same year a royal charter was issued and properties worth £37.13s.10d. p.a. (gross) were assigned from the Court of Augmentations for the support of the free school to be established and for the relief of ten poor persons. A schoolmaster of good character and ability was to be appointed, one learned in the Latin language, who should offer free instruction, while the constitution of the school was to be ordered by the city authorities with the advice and consent of the Bishop.¹¹⁷ The school was founded at once and in the following year (1553) received a bequest from a clergyman, Nicholas Jobbyn of Bath, of certain books for the use of the master and students as well as a sum of approximately £8 for the repair of the premises comprising the endowment.¹¹⁸

At about the same date (1552) a grammar school was founded at Frome, presumably upon local petition, from a portion of the revenues of three chantries vested in the parish church with a combined income of £22.8s.6d. p.a. The sum of £6 p.a. was assigned for the support of the schoolmaster by direct payment from the Exchequer, while an additional £5 p.a. was vested in the foundation, also from chantry revenues, some years later. We have found no record of any substantial additions to these endowments by private benefactors during the remainder of our period.¹¹⁹

We have noted that there had been a hospital school at Bridgwater during the Middle Ages, but that the work of instruction had lapsed long before our period. The want of a school was keenly felt by the residents of the town, who addressed a petition to the Crown in 1548, through the Chantry Commissioners, for aid in founding a school there.¹²⁰ No action was taken until 1561, when Queen Elizabeth leased to certain persons for a term of years the tithes of the parish,

¹¹⁶ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 451-453; *PP* 1826, 8: 331-338; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 1-4, 165-172, 1888; *Somerset Arch. Soc.* 13: 35-40, 1866; (Walrond) PCC 36 Arundell 1581.

¹¹⁷ Symons, K. E., *The grammar school of King Edward VI, Bath*, 59-110, Bath, Melluish, 1934; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 443; *PP* 1820, 5: 269-283, App.: 511-520.

¹¹⁸ PCC F.10 Tashe 1553; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 145-146, 1905.

¹¹⁹ *PP* 1820, 4: 335; Archbold, *Somerset religious houses*, 291; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 455; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: xx, 102-104, 285-288, 1888.

¹²⁰ *Vide ante*, 61.

stipulating that a rent-charge of £6.13s.4d. p.a. should be paid to a schoolmaster to provide instruction in good letters for the youth of Bridgwater and nearby towns. This arrangement was confirmed in perpetuity by James I in *ca.* 1610 when the tithes reverted to the Crown.¹²¹ In 1634 a London merchant, Richard Castleman, a native of Bridgwater, in addition to bequests of £100 for the poor of the town and of the same amount for the endowment of a lectureship, left £100 as endowment to the free school for the "bringing up of poor scholars," the municipal authorities serving as trustees of the fund.¹²²

Sir John Newton of East Harptree built a schoolhouse there some years before his death in 1568 and supported a teacher from his own funds. His will provided a bequest of £10 p.a. as a permanent endowment which would produce an adequate stipend for a master who should teach poor children to read without any fee being imposed.¹²³ Still another small foundation was provided for High Ham parish by its rector, Adrian Schael. He had apparently arranged some time before his death for the institution of a school in a house near the church, leased at a nominal sum from the lord of the manor. There is no indication that provision was made for the payment of the master, who was quite possibly Schael himself. The will provided a capital sum of £50 for the relief of the poor of the parish and an endowment of £120 for the stipend of a master who should maintain a free school in the premises already under leasehold. The school thus founded was constituted in 1598 with the inscription: "*Vt. pia. sit. studiisq; vacet generosa iuuvent, Hancadrianus Schael sustinet aere Scholam 1598.*"¹²⁴

A full generation was to elapse before the foundation of the next endowed grammar school in Somerset. In 1626 a London merchant, Sir George Strode, a native of Shepton Mallet, where his family was at once numerous and well placed, and his brother, William Strode of Barrington, vested in twelve trustees "the site and soil of the court of the manor" of Shepton Mallet. A year later the Strodes completed at a total cost of about £150 certain building and renovation which provided five almshouses, a schoolhouse, a dwelling house for the schoolmaster, and a chapel for their foundation. These properties were duly conveyed by deed (May 4, 1627) to the feoffees. The donors then vested additional properties worth £16.18s. p.a. for five poor widows in the almshouses, each to have £3.9s.4d. p.a. and a broadcloth gown of 20s. value every second year. By the same indenture the schoolmaster was endowed with a stipend of £13 p.a. for teaching

¹²¹ *PP* 1826, 13: 421-424; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 446-447; Jarman, S. G., *History of Bridgwater*, 232, London, 1889.

¹²² *Vide ante*, 51, and *post*, 72.

¹²³ PCC 22 Babington 1568; Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 588-590. Sir John, who was lord of the manor of East Harptree, married Margaret, daughter of Sir Anthony Pointz, who bore him eight sons and twelve daughters.

¹²⁴ PCC 25 Kidd 1599; *PP* 1824, 14: 489.

twelve poor scholars on the foundation and for reciting prayers daily. The students in the grammar school were to be chosen from the town and parish of Shepton Mallet. A later conveyance of the property in 1651 established more firmly the paternal control of the Strode family, which remained deeply interested in education. William Strode of Barrington, who survived until 1666, founded and endowed still another grammar school at Martock with an income of £12 p.a. just after the close of our period (1662).¹²⁵

The last of the foundations of our period was made at Wells by Margaret Barkham during the period of the Protectorate. In late 1654 this woman, the widow of Ezekiel Barkham of Wells, conveyed to local trustees the sum of £800 on trust to found a school in conformity with an intention she and her husband had shared before his death in 1641. Towards this end the husband had sold lands yielding £30 p.a. at that time, in the expectation of endowing a free school in Wells in which poor children might be instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic until they were of an age when they might be apprenticed. The widow accordingly desired the trustees to appoint a learned and pious master, conformable to the Church of England, with a stipend of £20 p.a., while the remainder of the income should be employed for binding out the ablest of the scholars at the completion of their education. Mrs. Barkham remained actively interested in the affairs of the school, which was opened in 1656, until her death some years later.¹²⁶

Our records would suggest that in addition to these thirteen endowed schools, of which twelve had been established since 1498, serving the educational needs of the county at the close of our period, there was as well a considerable number of schools with no endowments or with scant endowments which were likewise fulfilling an extremely important function in their communities. These schools imposed small fees, some were in part supported by local rates, and all of them enjoyed at least partial support from local benefactions. Certain of these schools were ultimately to languish, while others were to be endowed at a date later than the period of this study.

¹²⁵ *PP* 1820, 4: 396-403; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 457-458; *DNB*. Sir George Strode (1583-1663) was the son of William Strode of Shepton Mallet, a gentleman and the grandnephew of the last Abbot of Glastonbury. He early entered trade in London and married a member (Rebecca Crisp) of the mercantile aristocracy of the city. A firm Royalist, he was knighted in 1641, served in the King's army, and lived abroad after the collapse of the royal cause.

William Strode (1589?-1666) was, on the other hand, a staunch partisan of Parliament. He opposed the King's commission of array in Somerset and was a colonel in the Parliamentary army. He entered Parliament in 1646 for Ilchester, but was excluded as a strong Presbyterian in Pride's Purge (1648). He was imprisoned for a brief season in 1661 for having disobeyed the orders of the King's officers in Somerset.

¹²⁶ *Vide ante*, 59.

Among these lesser schools was that at Mells to which John Robyns left 10s. for the master and £1.13s. to ten poor scholars in 1524 and which was evidently carrying on its work at the close of the century.¹²⁷ There was certainly a school at Nempnett as early as 1558.¹²⁸ The inhabitants of Yeovil cast envious eyes on a chapel with a valuable lead roof as a site for a schoolhouse during the visit of the Chantry Commissioners to that town, but there is no certain evidence that a school was begun there before 1573, when there is a record of the conversion of the chapel into school premises at a cost of £12.13s.4d.¹²⁹ A small endowment of £4 capital value was left to the school at Brewham by a yeoman, Hugh Batt, in 1583.¹³⁰ The school at Charlton Horethorne gained a small endowment of 14s. p.a. and a scholarship fund of £2 p.a., the latter being preferably for persons related to the donor, under the will of a gentleman, Leonard Lester, of that parish, in 1620.¹³¹ The grammar school at Martock was founded sometime before 1625 and already enjoyed more than a local reputation when William Strode gave it an adequate endowment in 1662.¹³² John Kinge of Blackford, a yeoman, by his will proved in 1627 sought to encourage the founding of a school at Wedmore, leaving £6.13s.4d. p.a. for the salary of a master, "provided always that he be a scholler sufficient to teach gramer and that he be thought a man sufficient by Richard Champneye," and provided further that such a school be opened within a period of six months under arrangements which ensured its continuance for a term of at least eight years.¹³³

The benefactors of Somerset had vested the thirteen endowed schools whose establishment we have been discussing with endowments totaling £5,657.4s. during the course of our period. All these foundations, save for that at High Ham, were by 1660 at least adequately endowed in relation to their size and the stipends paid to provincial schoolmasters in this age. In addition, the generous total of £4,245.1s. had been provided for school buildings, for the support of less substantially endowed foundations, as outright gifts to assist in the day-to-day needs of various schools, and for the endowment of schools outside the county. There were likewise at least seven schools with little or no endowment which were nonetheless rendering great services to their communities, some of which were at later dates to command substantial endowments.

These twenty schools were reasonably well distributed over approximately three-quarters of the county. With very few exceptions the schools founded

in this period were quite specifically meant to serve not only the parish in which they were situated, but poor boys in their general neighborhood. There was, so far as our records indicate, no school yet founded in the thinly populated region to the west of Taunton and Bridgwater, but, except in the area west of a line drawn roughly from Chipstable through Clatworthy and Stogumber to East Quantoxhead, it may safely be said that no family in Somerset lived more than twelve miles from a school at the close of our period. Though the grammar-school foundations in Somerset are hardly comparable to those in certain of the other counties examined, it is nonetheless true that a great advance had been made during the Tudor and early Stuart age and that the basis for widespread and competent secondary education had been securely established.

The interest of Somerset benefactors was by no means confined to the founding of schools and the extension of the means for popular education. A considerably larger total, amounting to £16,495.12s., or 14.16 per cent of all charities, was given by several donors towards the support of the universities, and, as we shall observe, the substantial total of £3,655.10s. was provided for scholarship endowments. We shall now want to mention at least briefly the larger of these benefactions.

Richard Fitz James, Bishop of London, who, as we have noted, was the founder of a school in his native town of Bruton, expended an estimated £400 completing the warden's lodgings and repairing the fabric of Merton College, Oxford, during his lifetime.¹³⁴ At about the same time Robert Honeywood, Archdeacon of Bath and Canon of Windsor, in addition to bequests of £20 in doles to the poor and £10 for various religious purposes, left real property to All Souls College, Oxford, with a (partly estimated) value of £102 for the general uses of the foundation, but with the stipulation that prayers should be said for his soul on each anniversary of his death.¹³⁵ Still another great cleric, John Still, Bishop of Bath and Wells, whose alms-house foundation has already been mentioned, in 1600 gave £66.13s.4d. to the general uses of Trinity College, Cambridge, to which he added a bequest of £30 at the time of his death in 1608.¹³⁶

The overshadowing educational benefaction of our period was the foundation of Wadham College under the instruction of Nicholas Wadham in 1609. Wadham was born in 1532 in Devon, where his family had prospered steadily since the fourteenth century, but made his home at Merifield, in Ilton parish, Somerset, where he resided continuously from 1555 to the year

¹²⁷ PCC F.19 Bodfelde 1524; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 225, 1903; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 455.

¹³⁴ *Vide ante*, 62.

¹²⁸ *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 21: 212-213, 1905.
¹²⁹ *Ibid.* 2: 141, 1888; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 455.

¹³⁰ PCC 10 Watson 1583.

¹³¹ PCC 56 Soame 1620.

¹³² *Vide ante*, 64.

¹³³ PCC 25 Skynner 1627.

¹³⁵ PCC 2 Bodfelde 1522; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 216-217, 1903; Robertson, C. G., *All Souls College*, 18, 330, London, 1899. Honeywood had been a fellow of All Souls.

¹³⁶ *Vide ante*, 55. Still had earlier (1577) been Master of

Trinity and in 1592 had been Vice-Chancellor of the University.

of his death. He had married Dorothy Petre, daughter of Sir William Petre, Secretary of State, a woman of remarkable character and of quiet Roman Catholic sympathies. Wadham was a careful and intelligent landlord whose estate yielded him in his later years an annual revenue of at least £3,000, thus establishing him as one of the great landowners of the realm, from which he saved upwards of £14,000 even after founding his richly endowed almshouse at Ilton in 1606.¹³⁷ He and his wife, having no children, are said at one time to have considered founding a college in Venice for the education of Catholic Englishmen, but this hardly seems consonant with the strongly Protestant temper of the constitution he ultimately drafted for Wadham College. His determination growing after 1606 to expend almost the whole of his personal estate on an educational foundation, he purchased before his death lands in Essex with an annual value of £400 as the intended endowment for his institution. He had, in Fuller's pithy words, "great length in his extraction, breadth in his estate, and depth in his liberality."¹³⁸ Wadham died in 1609, leaving no more than oral instructions and a signed instrument for the founding of his college, but his widow, who lived until 1618, carried forward the plans faithfully and generously after successfully defending her resolute intention in two Chancery suits.¹³⁹ The site of the priory of the Austin Friars was purchased for the college in 1610 at a cost of £860 and the buildings were completed, principally by Somerset workmen, in 1613 at a total charge on the estate of £11,369.¹⁴⁰ The constitution provided what were then generous stipends for a warden, fifteen fellows, fifteen scholars, two chaplains, and two clerks, as members of the foundation. The Essex properties, together with two rectories and a manor purchased by Dorothy Wadham for £6,220, were vested as endowment. The statutes stipulated that the fellowships were to be tenable for a term of years only and that neither the warden nor the fellows need be in holy orders. Three of the scholars must be from Somerset, and as many from Essex, while the remaining nine might be drawn from any part of England. It seems probable that in the end not less than £26,470 was vested in this great foundation, of which £19,200 was drawn from Nicholas Wadham's estate and £7,270 was the direct gift of Dorothy Wadham.¹⁴¹ Thus, despite Nicholas Wadham's "failure

to make proper legal arrangements for the foundation, despite his contradictory behaviour in the last hours of his life, and despite opposition from at least two of the co-heirs, Dorothy's energetic lobbying of lawyers and politicians and her willingness to devote a considerable part of her private fortune to the College enabled it to be built and reasonably endowed within four years of her husband's death. Thanks to her and her powerful friends one of the largest single charitable foundations of the seventeenth century was successfully launched. This was no mean feat for an old lady of nearly eighty, harassed by enemies and handicapped by her Roman Catholic beliefs."¹⁴²

Wadham College was almost immediately the beneficiary under the will of a Somerset friend of the founder, Philip Bisse, the rector of Batcombe parish during almost a half-century (1564–1613). Bisse, "a learned man, and great lover of learning," left a remarkable and certainly a very large private library of 2,000 volumes, which was valued by Anthony Wood at £1,700, to constitute the nucleus of the new college's library. By the direction of Dorothy Wadham the donor's name was inscribed on each title page.¹⁴³

John Whetstone, whose almshouse foundation at Ilton has been noted, by his will proved in 1617 left the capital sum of £500 to Winchester College "to the maintenance and preferment of poore men's sonnes" and an equal amount for the general uses of Trinity College, Cambridge.¹⁴⁴ And, finally, we should mention the bequests of Arthur Lake, Bishop of Bath and Wells, who on his death in 1626 gave a library valued at £400 to New College, Oxford. Lake, a native of Hampshire, had earlier founded a library at Worcester Cathedral and likewise established a smaller collection at Wells Cathedral at a personal charge of £100. In 1616 he had provided an endowment of £200 for lectureships in Hebrew and mathematics at New College and had given liberally to the needs of the college during his lifetime.¹⁴⁵

College, 1–54, London, 1898; *DNB*. It should be said that we have reckoned Wadham's benefaction as £14,000, the total of his intended gift for the foundation.

¹⁴² The discussion of the founding of Wadham College rests heavily on particulars so kindly supplied by a distinguished historian now a member of that foundation, Mr. Lawrence Stone. The quotation cited above is drawn from Mr. Stone's memorandum on the subject, which it is hoped he will in due season publish.

¹⁴³ PCC 114 Capell 1613; Wells, *Wadham College*, 36–38; Fuller, *Worthies* 3: 107. Three centuries later, all Bisse's books could still be identified, and a large number of them could also be recognized in another way: on the edges of the pages are written their titles in black letter. It was the fashion of the time to shelf books with the backs inside, in order to save the bindings from undue wear. We have set a very roughly estimated value of £700 on this great gift.

¹⁴⁴ *Vide ante*, 55–56.

¹⁴⁵ PCC 99 Skynner 1627; Cassan, *Bishops of Bath*, pt. 2: 30; *DNB*. Lake (1569–1626) had been educated at Winchester and at Oxford. He was elected Warden of New College in

¹³⁷ *Vide ante*, 55.

¹³⁸ Fuller, *Worthies* 3: 107.

¹³⁹ Wadham College MSS., 4/10, 11; Briggs, Nancy, The foundation of Wadham College, *Oxoniana* 21: 61–81, 1956; Collier, J. P., ed., *The Egerton papers*, 485, London, Camden Society, 1840.

¹⁴⁰ The final cost of the site and buildings, after the completion of the chapel in 1621, was about £12,250 (Wadham College MSS. 8/1, 4/23, 35, Augustine Friars 6; Essex Record Office, D/DP Q 13/3/13).

¹⁴¹ PCC 118 Dorset 1609 (Nicholas Wadham); PCC 60 Meade 1618 (Dorothy Wadham); Wells, Joseph, *Wadham*

The interest of the county in the universities was further demonstrated by the generous support provided for fellowships and scholarships, usually with an indicated preference for men from Somerset. We have already dealt with Wadham's great foundation, which was only the largest of a fair number of such funds. In all, Wadham's gift aside, £3,655.10s. was vested in these endowments, the principal of which should be noted.

A substantial endowment was established in 1501 by the will of Sir John Byconyll, a rich landholder who had sat in Parliament for Somerset and Dorset (1472-1475) and who had served as sheriff of both counties. He had supported Henry Tudor at Bosworth, where he was knighted on the field, and had lent his assistance in the march into Somerset in 1497 when the Perkin Warbeck rising was suppressed. After bequests for the poor and for various religious uses,¹⁴⁶ Byconyll's will charged his estate with an annual stipend totaling £31.16s., or £636 of capital worth, for the support of ten scholars at Oxford who should "procede in lernynge of dyvinitie to teche the people of God," and with the further provision that these scholars be chosen from the numerous parishes in which he held land. The Abbot of Glastonbury was named as trustee, Byconyll and his wife having arranged to be buried there in a chapel which he had provided during his lifetime.¹⁴⁷

There were numerous small gifts and bequests for scholarships during the next century, totaling £111.18s., principally in the form of outright payments to students in the grammar schools of the county or to those enrolled in the universities. But the next great foundation, Wadham's always excepted, was that created in 1616 by the will of Richard Huish, whose munificent almshouse foundation for his native town of Taunton has already been noted. Huish charged his estate with the large sum of £100 p.a., suggesting a capital value of £2,000, for the creation of five university scholarships in either of the universities, each scholar to have the extremely generous stipend of £20. Holders of his name were to be preferred, but, in default of such applicants, students from Taunton in particular and Somerset in general were first to be considered, and then applicants from Devon. The legal title to the fund was vested in the governors of his own trust rather than in the universities, the endowment being constituted of extensive London properties which Huish had accumulated during his years in trade there.¹⁴⁸

Shortly afterwards, in 1617, William Crowther, the vicar at Wiveliscombe, after small bequests for charitable purposes totaling £8, left the residue of his estate,

1613 and was made Bishop of Bath and Wells in 1616. He was brother to Sir Thomas Lake, the Secretary of State.

¹⁴⁶ *Vide post*, 70.

¹⁴⁷ PCC 5 Blamyr 1501; *Somerset Arch. Soc.* 40: 209-221, 1894; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 6-9, 1903.

¹⁴⁸ *Vide ante*, 55.

with a value of approximately £200, as a scholarship fund with a stipulated preference for anyone bearing the name of Crowther from Wiveliscombe, Ludlow, Shrewsbury, London, Oxford, Cambridge, or Bristol who might wish to be educated in divinity, philosophy, physic, or in a "knowledge of the tongues."¹⁴⁹ Some years later another clergyman, William Owsley of Shepton Beauchamp, by an indenture dated January 20, 1625, vested in trustees an estate then worth £28.14s.8d. p.a., of which the annual sum of £20 was designated for the "perpetual relief and maintenance" of four scholars in any Oxford college. Young men resident in Merton, Crewkerne, and Shepton Beauchamp were to be preferred, the remaining vacancies to be filled from graduates of the free school at Ilminster.¹⁵⁰

These are but the largest of the Somerset endowments, which are in turn quite typical of those being established all over England during our period. Such endowments, needless to say, were immensely effective in broadening the social and economic base from which the universities might draw their students, with a consequent enlargement and enrichment of the culture of the age. In Somerset alone scholarships were created during our period which might, under certain conditions of selection with respect to indicated preferences, have maintained in any one year as many as twenty-six students from the county in the universities. When this remarkable achievement is considered in relation to the free grammar schools with which the county had so recently been endowed, we gain some measure of understanding of the immensity of the social and cultural revolution which private charity had wrought during the first two centuries of the modern era.

5. RELIGION

Somerset was an intensely conservative rural county during much of our period. It possessed a strong monastic tradition, and it possessed as well great landed families which were pertinacious in their religious interests. Few of the counties of England were so deeply devoted to the needs of religion as was Somerset during the sixty years of our period that lie before the Reformation, and it was only gradually that this strong tradition was broken. In total, pious men and women gave the large sum of £31,865.14s. for various religious uses during the course of our period, amounting to 27.35 per cent of the whole of the charitable benefactions for the county. This represents one of the highest proportions of charitable wealth devoted to religious uses in any of the counties included in our study and, for that matter, in all of England. Moreover, it stands in most decided contrast to neighboring Bristol, where sentiment was intensely secular, only slightly more than 13 per cent of all charitable resources having been dedicated to religious uses there.

¹⁴⁹ PCC 66 Weldon 1617, 104 Parker 1619.

¹⁵⁰ *Vide ante*, 51.

In the great outpouring for religious purposes which occurred in the pre-Reformation years, the formidable sum of £21,025.16s. was given for these uses. This amount is slightly more than 68 per cent of all benefactions during the interval and accounted, it should be emphasized, for almost two-thirds of the total given during the whole of our period for religious purposes. Of this, we should note, the large sum of £10,252.5s., or about half the whole, was provided for chantries and prayers. Moreover, of this latter amount, the amazing total of £9,237.19s. was in the form of endowed chantries and obits, the income of which should have been quite sufficient to maintain at least seventy-five chantry priests on the stipends customary in the Somerset of this period.

The Reformation blew with a cold wind on Somerset's piety. During these years religious benefactions fell to £1,944.7s., and, even more significantly, the proportion of religious benefactions to the total of charitable gifts declined from considerably more than two-thirds (68.06 per cent) to somewhat less than a fourth (24.15 per cent). Repair of the fabric and the general needs of the Church became in this period the dominant, as well as the prudent, preoccupation of donors, though a stubborn and continuing disposition to provide prayers is to be observed. During the Elizabethan age, gifts and bequests for religious uses fell away precipitously in Somerset as they did throughout England. In the course of these four decades only £1,030.14s. was provided, amounting to only 12.70 per cent of the whole of charitable funds in the county for this interval. Of this grossly inadequate total, rather more than two-thirds was given for the semi-civic purpose of the repair of the church fabric, the numerous other religious needs being almost wholly ignored. During the early Stuart years, Somerset donors gave to the Church at an annual rate which was more than six times as great, the total for the period rising to £6,959.5s. But, as we have seen, these were the decades when there was a veritable flood of giving in the county for secular aspirations, with the result that the proportion designated for religious causes actually declined slightly to 11.81 per cent of the whole. Further, a closer examination of the figures shows that of the total amount, £4,388.13s. was for church building and almost £1,000 was for the endowment of Puritan lectureships, the other and more normal religious requirements remaining sadly neglected. This neglect had now continued for eighty years, and it was of course deepened during the revolutionary decades, when the total afforded for all religious purposes sank to £905.12s., this being less than a tenth (8.58 per cent) of all the charitable funds given in the interval.

Perhaps the most sensitive measure of the strength and intensity of interest in the needs of the Church is supplied by the record of the gifts and bequests to the Church for its general uses. These, as we have seen,

included gifts to the Church of an amazing variety, which were all designed to add strength and richness to the administration of the sacraments and the conduct of the services within the parish church.¹⁵¹ During the whole of our period £3,794.5s., or 3.26 per cent of all charitable benefactions, was provided for this purpose. Approximately half (52.33 per cent) of this total was in the form of capital sums, the remainder of £1,808.14s. being comprised of many hundreds of quite small benefactions for immediate use.

The great mass of the gifts for the general uses of the Church, in number of benefactions and in total amount, was accumulated during the years before the Reformation settlement. The considerable total of £2,252.6s. was furnished for this purpose during these six decades, or 59.36 per cent of the amount supplied for general church use during our entire period. Rather surprisingly, these benefactions were continued at an almost level annual rate during the unsettled years of the Reformation, for £610.13s. was given in these two decades. But the creeping chill of Elizabethan secularism descended as effectively in Somerset as in the other counties we have examined. In this period of forty years a total of no more than £192 was provided for the general uses of the churches, or an appallingly low average figure of something like 8s. for each parish church in the county over a span of nearly a half-century. This can only mean that the intense secularism of the government found full support in the county at large and that the Church, gravely weakened financially by the Reformation settlement, was further weakened by the withdrawal of broadly based financial support in the parishes. Nor was there any real recovery during the early Stuart period, despite the more favorable attitude of the Crown and the energetic but certainly ill-advised threatenings of Laud and his bishops. During these four decades only £325.9s. was given for the general uses of the Church, an amount exceeded substantially in each of five decades prior to the accession of Queen Elizabeth. Recovery of support in Somerset, as in other counties, did not appear until the godly had triumphed in the field and in Parliament, for in the two revolutionary decades the total given for the general needs of the Church rose substantially to £413.17s.

As we have noted, approximately half the total of benefactions made for the general uses of the Church was in the form of endowment for the support of the service in particular parishes. Three of these, selected from different periods, will perhaps suffice to illustrate the variety of these benefactions. Thus in 1481 Walter Mayhew of Crocombe, probably a clothier, gave lands and other properties which were (in 1548) valued at £27.6s.8d. p.a. for general church purposes. The sum of 6s.8d. p.a. was designated as an endowment for keeping a lamp burning perpetually

¹⁵¹ *Vide ante*, 40.

before the high altar of Croscombe Church. The remainder was vested in the guild, or fraternity, of his church for maintaining a priest at East Horrington Chapel, for the support of another light before the altar at Croscombe, the nightly ringing of a curfew, the general uses of the church, and certain other small payments.¹⁵² A generation later (in 1528) Bishop Fox of Winchester gave £100 of capital for the general uses of Glastonbury Abbey and the support of its religious exercises.¹⁵³ During the Cromwellian period (1654) the redoubtable Presbyterian general, Sir William Waller, whose troops stripped Chichester and Winchester cathedrals of their images and ornaments, gave the sum of £300 for the general uses and endowment of the services of the abbey church in Bath.¹⁵⁴

But, important as these large gifts may have been for particularly favored parishes, they were few in number and decidedly untypical. Far more important for the ordinary parish and far more significant as an indication of popular support for religious needs were the hundreds of small and customary bequests, at least prior to 1560, for the general uses of the Church. In the first decade of our period, for example, we have noted a total of sixty-one such gifts and bequests for immediate use, amounting in all to £82.10s. and ranging in amount from 1d. to £19.17s.; in the decade in which Henry VIII came to the throne there were 169 such gifts and bequests, totaling £188.2s., ranging in size from 2d. to £18.3s.; while in the decade of the Henrician Reformation these bequests rose in number to 410 for a total of £245.1s. given to support the general needs of the Church and in amounts ranging from 1d. to £14.7s. In marked and certainly in significant contrast there were only forty-six gifts and bequests for immediate use in the Elizabethan decade 1581-1590, when the total given was £22.6s. and the range was from 3d. to £4. These customary gifts simply dried up in Somerset, as in other counties, about 1560 and were at once replaced by customary sums left by the rank and file of the population for the outright relief of the poor. A great and a permanent shift in men's interests and aspirations had evidently occurred.

The conservative piety of Somerset during the early decades of our period is further attested by the relatively very large amount vested in chantries and other forms of prayers for the dead. A total of £10,818.12s. was given for these purposes, amounting to 9.28 per cent of all charitable benefactions for the county in the course of our period and to almost a third of the total provided for all charitable uses, lay and spiritual, during the first of our intervals, 1480-1540. Of this total, £9,237.19s., or 85.39 per cent, was in the form of

¹⁵² *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 312-313, 1888; *ibid.* 4: 10-11, 1890.

¹⁵³ *Vide ante*, 62.

¹⁵⁴ Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (1): 71; *PP* 1820, 5: 298; Warner, Richard, *History of Bath*, 263, Bath, 1801; *DNB*. Warner gives the date as 1646.

capital gifts for the founding of chantries or endowed prayers of a more modest sort.

This is all the more remarkable since the county already had a great many chantry foundations in 1480 and since the not unbiased, but nonetheless dependable, report of the Chantry Commissioners in 1548 would suggest that these endowments had been particularly ill administered in Somerset during the closing decades of the Middle Ages. In 1548 there were 250 chantry chapels in the county, of which our records would indicate 52 had been founded, with endowments ranging from £40 upwards, during our period. The total income of chantry chapels in the year of the visitation came to £933 p.a., of which almost £462 p.a. had been vested by donors in the interval 1480-1540.¹⁵⁵ This documents most startlingly the enormous rate of attrition which had always characterized these foundations and corroborates the testimony of the commissioners regarding diversion of endowments, the loss of property through lax administration, and the ill fate which almost predictably overcame these tenuous foundations once the children of the donor had died and family vigilance had been relaxed. The foundations which we have noted in the six decades prior to the Reformation alone should have been sufficient to support nearly seventy-five stipendiary priests, yet in 1548 there were apparently not more than eighty-seven such priests serving chantry chapels whether on medieval or more recent endowments.

The £10,818.12s. provided for prayers in Somerset represents a very considerable capital sum and in proportionate terms is, after Yorkshire, the highest in all the counties comprehended in our study.¹⁵⁶ This may well be accounted for by the general conservatism of this western county, by the fact that it possessed great and on the whole well-administered monastic foundations, and by the strength of the gentry, the class normally most responsible for these endowments, in the economy of the county. We should now comment in some detail on at least a few of these numerous foundations.

Sir Richard Choke, Justice of the Common Pleas through the troubled reigns of Edward IV, Henry VI, Edward V, and Richard III, at his death in 1486 endowed a chantry in the chapel he had built at Long Ashton, where he maintained his seat, with an endowment of about £240 for the support of a priest and for payments to six priests who were to attend his obit. The stipendiary priest enjoyed an income in 1548 of £7.16s.8d. p.a.¹⁵⁷ John Paulet, the charities of several

¹⁵⁵ This somewhat overstates the income, since the capital total includes small endowments for obits as well as chantry foundations proper.

¹⁵⁶ The proportions range from 0.80 per cent for Buckinghamshire to 10.49 per cent for Yorkshire. The proportion for Somerset is 9.28 per cent.

¹⁵⁷ PCC 21 Logge 1483 (?); *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 93-94, 1888; *ibid.* 16: 238-243, 1901; Collinson, *Somerset* 2: 291-

of whose descendants have already been noted, at his death in 1494 left £9.7s. for the general uses of certain churches in Somerset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire, as well as making generous provisions for prayers for the repose of his own soul. He bequeathed £133.6s.8d. to the monastery of Boxgrove (Sussex), where he wished to be buried, for the support of daily masses to be celebrated there in perpetuity. In addition, he had built a chantry chapel at Nunney, Somerset, to which he gave £5 for ornamentation as well as an endowment of approximately £146 to secure the salary of a chantry priest.¹⁵⁸ A more impressive endowment for prayers was created under the will of Jasper Tudor, Duke of Bedford, and uncle of Henry VII. He vested in the monastery at Keynsham, Somerset, lands with a clear value of £40 to £50 p.a. "for the fyndyng of 4 preestes to syng perpetually in the said church and monastery aswele for my soule and for my faders soule, as for the soules of the [lady of] noble memorie Kateryne, some tyme quene of Englond, my moder, and of Edmund, late Erle of Richemonde, my brother."¹⁵⁹

We have already spoken of the great bequest of Sir John Byconyll of North Curry for the endowment of scholarships at Oxford. His will likewise specified a bequest of £60 (partly estimated) for church repairs in Somerset, £10 for general church uses, and two chantries to be established to provide prayers for his soul. The chantry endowment, like his scholarship fund, was vested in sixteen trustees, some lay and some ecclesiastical, to be named by the Abbot of Glastonbury, with self-perpetuating provisions to ensure the proper and continuing discharge of the trust.¹⁶⁰ Three years later, Agnes Burton of Taunton, the widow of a London merchant by her first marriage and of a Taunton merchant by her second, made generous provision from her large estate for her soul's repose. She made a capital gift of £66.13s.4d. for the relief of the poor, a generous bequest for completing the tower of St. Mary Magdalen Church, Taunton, and established a chantry with a total worth of approximately £303, consisting of the profits from ten houses in Taunton and Bridgwater, wherewith her executors were to "fynde an honest preest to syng and say masse dailey" for herself and an assorted group of relations and friends. The priest was to have £6 p.a. as his stipend, while £1 p.a. was to be expended for addi-

292; *DNB*. Choke was born at Stanton Drew. He grew rich in the practice of the law. In 1454 he purchased the manor of Long Ashton, whose revenue was reported to be £400 p.a., and at the time of his death held as well the manors of Stanton Drew and Temple Cloud, not to mention Randolveston in Dorset. His grandsons, Nicholas and Henry Choke, in their turn founded a chantry at Long Ashton with an annual income of £4.17s. in 1548.

¹⁵⁸ PCC 22 Vox 1494; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 100, 1888; *ibid.* 16: 220, 1901.

¹⁵⁹ PCC 33 Vox 1496; *VCH, Somerset* 2: 131; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 16: 327-329, 1901.

¹⁶⁰ *Vide ante*, 67.

tional obits and the care of the church and chantry.¹⁶¹ One of the witnesses to her will, a Taunton clothier, William Nethway, made similar arrangements in his will proved in 1516. Nethway, who left a total of £407.11s. to charities, had purchased the manor of Cocke, which he charged with an annual payment of about £15 for the celebration of two obits and the support of a chantry priest in his chapel "in the church yarde of the priory." His will further provided small sums for other religious purposes, a contingent annuity for the repair of roads, and £30 for the relief of poor persons.¹⁶²

John Cable of Frome, of the lower gentry, in 1517 built a chapel in the parish church of that town which he endowed with real property consisting of four messuages, two acres of land, a rent-charge of 3s. p.a., and a remainder interest in five other messuages. It seems probable that the remainder never reverted to this trust, since in 1548 the clear value of the endowment was reported as £7.11s.8d. p.a., the chaplain being pensioned at £5 p.a.¹⁶³ A much more ambitious foundation was created at Exeter Cathedral under the will of Sir John Speke of White Lackington in the next year. Speke conveyed to trustees the manor of Langford Fivehead, two messuages, and 182 acres of land, on trust for the support of a chantry chapel which he had completed in the cathedral church of Exeter at a charge of approximately £325. The stipendiary priest was vested with lands worth £11.15s.10d. p.a., representing a capital value for the chantry of approximately £236.¹⁶⁴ Sir John Trevelyan of Nettlecombe, in 1522, ordered a chantry chapel to be completed, arranging that the residue, after certain debts, from a fund of £200 be employed by his executors for the finishing of the chapel and the endowment of a stipendiary priest.¹⁶⁵

We may conclude with a note on the prodigal charities of John, Baron Zouche, who confessed in his will proved in 1525 that his bequests laid a possibly intolerable burden on his estate. The will and the bequests are curiously medieval, as perhaps is fitting for the seventh baron in his line in an age which the testator found unpleasant and in a regimen which had kept him under attainder for a full decade. Lord Zouche left £1 p.a. to the poor of Stavordale (Wincanton parish) as well as an estimated £30 for gowns to

¹⁶¹ PCC 7 Holgrave 1504; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 52-57, 1903.

¹⁶² PCC 26 Holder 1516; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 177-178, 1903. *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 22, 1888, suggests that the chapel was maintained in 1548 by a rent-charge of £6.2s.6d. p.a.

¹⁶³ Bennett, W. J. E., *The old church of S. John of Frome*, 25-26, Frome, 1866; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: xx, 103, 1888.

¹⁶⁴ PCC 9 Ayloffe 1518; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 189-190, 1903; *Somerset Arch. Soc.* 71: 32-33, 1925.

¹⁶⁵ PCC 27 Maynwaryng 1522; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 197-198, 1903. The Chantry Commissioners' report for this parish (*Somerset Rec. Soc.* 2: 48, 1888) makes no mention of this chantry.

the poor of the parish. He founded and built an elaborate chantry chapel at Stavordale Priory at an estimated cost of £300, which he then endowed with £13.8s. p.a. for the support of two stipendiary priests, plus a remainder of indeterminate value for the support of the chapel. He vested, as well, fractions of the revenue of certain of his manors for the maintenance of perpetual prayers in four other monastic chapels, which we should estimate as amounting to at least £18 p.a. And, finally, Lord Zouche left a rent-charge of £10 p.a. for church repairs. His total charitable bequests were £1,185.11s., of which approximately £628 capital value was for prayers and for which all save £50 was for the support of various religious uses.¹⁶⁶ The testament of John, Lord Zouche, very fittingly and certainly very accurately may be said to mark the end of an era.

We discover the end of an era, too, when we analyze the gifts made to the monasteries of the county during the six decades preceding the gigantic upheaval which was the Reformation. Lord Zouche was the principal of the monastic benefactors in this interval, but there were very few indeed in Somerset who retained his point of view. The total given for various monastic uses in the county was £1,792.14s., an amount which, it is true, is considerably larger than that for most English counties in this period. But it should be observed that this amount was only 8.53 per cent of the total given for religious purposes during the period 1480–1540 and was not more than 5.80 per cent of the amount given for all charitable purposes in this same interval. This is true despite, or possibly because of, the fact that Somerset included some of the richest and certainly some of the most famous of the foundations of the realm. The net income of its foundations at the time of the Dissolution came to the great total of £7,619.5s.6d. p.a., Somerset ranking just after Yorkshire and Middlesex in the wealth of its religious houses. This would suggest a capital worth for these houses, of which Glastonbury accounted for almost half the whole, of something like £152,385, an immense accumulation of pious funds exceeding, it will be observed, the great total given during our entire period to all charitable purposes in the county. But this vast wealth was in a true and complete sense a legacy of the high Middle Ages. The resources of these foundations were increased during the two generations prior to the Reformation by only 1.18 per cent, which was a rate far less than the inevitable erosion of time, fire, structural decay, and monastic mismanagement. The monasteries had been repudiated by those able to support them a full half-century before Henry VIII's commissioners laid heavy hands on their records and on their wealth. One of many reasons for this profoundly important shift in the charitable disposition of good and responsible men may be discovered in the

fact that of the income available to these foundations, not more than £366.12s. p.a., or a scant 4.8 per cent, was being dispersed in alms under trust covenants towards the relief of the rural poverty which had by the fourth decade of the sixteenth century become a chronic national problem. This was in percentage terms a far better record in Somerset than in the nation at large, where only 2.4 per cent of all income was so disposed. But it still argues and perhaps attests the social bankruptcy of English monasticism well before the Reformation.¹⁶⁷

The total of monastic benefactions, £1,792.14s., was given by 155 individuals in amounts ranging from numerous gifts of 1s. or less to five of £100 or more. Rather more than a third (39.19 per cent) of the whole was given for monastic building or the repair of the fabric, while a slightly smaller proportion, 37.74 per cent of the total, was given for the general uses of these foundations, normally with a request for prayers. A total of £401.10s. was expressly given in the form of endowments for prayers, chantries aside, and the small sum of £12.4s. was left by various donors for designated regular clergy. We have been able to identify the social status of 113 of these 155 donors, and it is at once apparent that the conservative rural aristocracy and their dependents remained the class principally interested in monasticism in the county. Some forty-four of the contributors were of the landed aristocracy, two being nobles, sixteen of the upper gentry, and twenty-six of the lower gentry. This group, it is to be emphasized, gave almost 80 per cent of the total furnished for monastic uses. There were twenty-six donors to the monasteries who were yeomen or husbandmen, a surprisingly high proportion, whose bequests were normally made to a foundation in their own or a nearby parish. Sixteen were members of the lower clergy, while three were drawn from the ranks of the upper clergy. A total of nine of these donors were merchants, ten were tradesmen, four were "burghers," and one was an artisan.

The parochial clergy of the county were ill supported by its benefactors. Somerset was a large county with an extensive and a well-developed parochial system by the time of the settlement of religion under Elizabeth. A *Taxatio* of 1288–1291 suggests that at that date there were 276 parishes in the county, of which 42 were already appropriated to monasteries or to secular hands, this number of vicarages having increased to 60 by the close of the next century.¹⁶⁸ In 1560 the parochial structure stood nearly complete with 395 parish churches and 74 chapels, which for statistical purposes we are regarding as parishes, or 469 communities served by a church or a chapel.¹⁶⁹ The parish clergy were on balance slightly benefited by the

¹⁶⁶ Certain of the data in this paragraph are drawn from Savine, *English monasteries*, 237, 281–282.

¹⁶⁷ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 21–22.

¹⁶⁸ Camden gives the number of parishes as 385.

Henrician settlement but lost steadily in their economic and social position during the later Tudor period as inflation and the slow attrition on their income took their joint toll. Yet the needs of the clergy were persistently neglected through the whole of our long period. A total of £848.16s. has been recorded in benefactions to the clergy, of which £438.6s. was in the form of small outright legacies to particular ministers. Only £410.10s. was provided as endowments for the augmentation of inadequate clerical incomes, a trifling amount scarcely sufficient to secure adequate revenues for one new parish or the augmentation of perhaps two existing stipends.

Nor was much strength gained from Puritan donors, since extreme Protestantism made little progress in the county, save in the four major towns, until the very advent of the Civil War. A total of £1,020 was vested in Puritan lectureships during the course of our period, the principal benefactions being for Bruton and Bridgwater. The lectureship at Bridgwater was first established in 1592 by the vote of the aldermen of the town, the lecturer being in the next year appointed vicar of the parish.¹⁷⁰ In 1634 a London merchant, Richard Castleman, certain of whose generous dispositions for his native town of Bridgwater have already been recited, left £100 as an endowment for a weekly lecture in that community.¹⁷¹ Some years earlier (1617), Sir Maurice Berkeley by will provided a large endowment with a capital value of £800, and a convenient house and garden, for the support of "a reverend and learned preacher provided for and brought to Bruton" for the "instructinge and teachinge the people in the servise and feare of God," he to range as far forth from Bruton as God should enable him.¹⁷²

The men and women of the county displayed almost as much neglect for the care of the fabric of the Church as they did for the clergy who ministered to them. During our long period only £4,265 was given or bequeathed for the normal repair, decoration, and renovation of the 469 churches and chapels in this large county. This works out to slightly less than £9.2s. as an average for each church, an amount totally inadequate, particularly when one remembers that clerical and parish incomes were steadily straitened as the period wore on. It may be assumed that the church fabric of Somerset underwent steady and progressive deterioration as the sixteenth century advanced and that the many complaints regarding dilapidations and the numerous reports of churches not so much

¹⁷⁰ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 42.

¹⁷¹ *Vide ante*, 51, 64.

¹⁷² PCC 64 Weldon 1617; *Virginia Magazine* 18: 441-443, 1910. Berkeley was knighted at Cadiz in 1596 by Essex for conspicuous gallantry. He was a Member of Parliament in 1597, 1601, and 1604. He was a member of the Council of the Virginia Company, and his son was a governor of the colony.

unfit as unsafe for worship were well substantiated. The amount given for church repairs represents only 3.66 per cent of all charitable funds provided in the county, a proportion setting Somerset roughly in the middle of the group of counties under examination.¹⁷³

This almost complete neglect of the church fabric in Somerset, as in all other counties, did not set in until the advent of the Elizabethan era. During the first six decades of our period a possibly adequate total of £1,763.11s. was given for these important civic and spiritual uses, while during the years of the Reformation the relatively large total of £710.2s. was provided. But during the whole of the next century (1561-1660) only £1,791.7s. was made available for the care of the parish churches of the county, or an average amount per parish of only £3.16s.5d. in an age when construction costs were steadily rising. A substantial improvement may be noted from 1621 to 1640, which we may suppose was the result of the efforts of Laud and his followers, but even the £909.10s. given during these two decades could have effected no more than a patching of the now seriously decayed church fabric of Somerset.

The amounts provided by gift and bequest for major renovations in existing churches and the construction of new church buildings were by no means as inadequate as were the funds made available for the care of the fabric of the parochial churches of the county. In total, the very considerable sum of £11,119.1s. was given for construction, amounting to 9.54 per cent of all charities in the county and being in percentage terms one of the highest in all of England.¹⁷⁴ But this impressive total is misleading, since a large proportion of it was consumed in the £6,988.13s. required for the rebuilding of the great Bath Abbey Church and that, as we shall later observe, was a work of pious building paid for by the generosity of the whole of England. Moreover, well over half the total amount was provided during the period prior to the Reformation, when £6,470.8s. was given for construction. Such benefactions literally vanished in Somerset during the Elizabethan age, when the picayune sum of £40 was spent on the construction of a new tower for one parish church. The impressive outlay of £4,388.13s. in the early Stuart period went principally towards the continuing work on the Bath Abbey Church, while new building dropped away to almost nothing during the Cromwellian era.

Major improvements and enlargements were carried out in fourteen churches of the county during our period at an estimated total outlay of £1,400.8s. These expenditures were undertaken principally in the years prior to the Reformation and in the brief period 1621-

¹⁷³ The proportions range from 0.95 per cent for Bristol to 7.60 per cent for Kent.

¹⁷⁴ The proportions range from 2.67 per cent in Bristol to 11.55 per cent in Lancashire.

1640. They represent a very scant voluntary contribution towards making more adequate provision for a rapidly growing population and in meeting the requirements imposed by the decay, and in several cases even the collapse, of older churches. Among the more interesting and important of these major improvements were the building of the tower of St. Michael's in Dundry in 1482 by the Merchant Adventurers of Bristol as a landmark for seamen;¹⁷⁵ the rebuilding of the deanery of Wells Cathedral by John Gunthorpe, Dean of Wells, who died in 1498;¹⁷⁶ the extension of the church and the building of two chapels at Croscombe, principally by five local families in the early sixteenth century;¹⁷⁷ and the provision of a new aisle for the church at Kittisford in 1658.¹⁷⁸

In addition, we have evidence for the erection of nine chapels at a most roughly estimated cost of £930, all being built between the years 1489 and 1537. Most of these were chantry chapels, and every one of the nine was established in an existing church. The more important of these were: the chantry chapel provided in Wells Cathedral by Hugh Sugar, treasurer of the chapter, in *ca.* 1485;¹⁷⁹ the chapel built near Bath by Prior John Cantlow in conjunction with his hospital there;¹⁸⁰ Bishop Stillington's chapel in the cloister of Wells Cathedral;¹⁸¹ the chapel provided by Elizabeth Byconyll at Glastonbury in *ca.* 1504;¹⁸² the chapel built in Bath Abbey by the prior, William Bird, about a decade before his death in 1525;¹⁸³ Sir John Trevelyan's chapel at Nettlecombe in 1522;¹⁸⁴ and the chapel built by Elizabeth Chaworth at Backwell in 1537.¹⁸⁵

In all, not more than eight parish churches seem to have been built or rebuilt during the whole course of our period by voluntary subscriptions or private gifts. The whole of the estimated outlay for this building was £1,800. Four of these churches were completed in the period prior to the Reformation, a period nearly a century (*ca.* 1524–1613) intervening before any major church building was again undertaken in Somerset. This was, of course, the period of "high Tudor" secularism when every aspect of religious need was

to experience a substantial and a continuous neglect as men's social and institutional aspirations turned with an almost violent intensity to a variety of secular concerns.

The first of the parish churches rebuilt during our period was that at Batheaston, at the charge of the great Prior of Bath, John Cantlow, whose substantial benefactions have been noted in another connection.¹⁸⁶ His successor, William Bird, built the parish church at Widcombe at the beginning of the sixteenth century at an estimated charge of £300.¹⁸⁷ Another great monastic dignitary, Richard Bere, Abbot of Glastonbury (1493–1524), restored and substantially rebuilt the parish church, St. Benedict, in *ca.* 1515 at a cost of approximately £200.¹⁸⁸

All this building, it will be noted, was at the hands and charge of the great monastic foundations of the county. With the expropriation of the monastic properties and with the disappearance of the priors of Bath and the abbots of Glastonbury, who for many years past had tended to overshadow the bishops in the institutional as well as the ecclesiastical affairs of the county, the whole tradition of church building seems to have withered during a century when the population of Somerset probably increased by as much as half. It was not until 1613 that Sir Thomas Wroth, who represented Bridgwater in Parliament and who had many connections in the county, rebuilt the church at North Petherton at a cost of about £300.¹⁸⁹ The building of the church at Low Ham was begun at the charge of Sir Edward Hext in 1624,¹⁹⁰ and that at Wyke Champflower in Bruton at about the same time by Henry Southworth, lord of the manor of Wyke.¹⁹¹ These are the principal voluntary outlays made in the county during a very long period for the rebuilding of old parish churches or the construction of new edifices. It would seem certain indeed that on balance Somerset was not nearly so well served by its churches in 1660 as it had been at the beginning of our period. Churches had decayed or had fallen victim to storm or structural collapse; the population had greatly increased; and the parochial structure of the county had become much more complex during this long interval. But only modest and most halting efforts had been made during this intensely secular age to keep pace with the profoundly important changes that

¹⁷⁵ Burder, W. C., *et al.*, *Architectural antiquities of Bristol*, no pagination, Bristol, 1851.

¹⁷⁶ Parker, J. H., *Architectural antiquities of Wells*, 17, Oxford, 1866.

¹⁷⁷ *Bristol and Gloucs. Arch. Soc.* 36: 26, 1913.

¹⁷⁸ Brown, *Wills* 2: 80.

¹⁷⁹ Cook, G. H., *Mediaeval chantries*, 121, London, Phoenix House, 1947.

¹⁸⁰ *Vide ante*, 60, and *infra*.

¹⁸¹ Cassan, *Bishops of Bath*, pt. 1: 254.

¹⁸² PCC 13 Holgrave 1504; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 72–74, 1903. She was the widow of Sir John Byconyll (*vide ante*, 67, 70).

¹⁸³ Cook, *Mediaeval chantries*, 146. *Vide post*, 74.

¹⁸⁴ *Vide ante*, 70.

¹⁸⁵ Master, G. S., *Parochial history of Backwell*, 50–53, Bristol, 1898.

¹⁸⁶ *Vide ante*, 60.

¹⁸⁷ Davis, *Landmarks of Bath*, 45. *Vide post*, 74.

¹⁸⁸ *Vide ante*, 53.

¹⁸⁹ Fraser, Maxwell, *Companion into Somerset*, 195, London, Methuen, 1947; *DNB*. Wroth (1584–1672) was high in the councils of the Virginia Company and was in 1635 appointed a commissioner for the government of the Bermudas. He was knighted in 1613.

¹⁹⁰ *Vide ante*, 56.

¹⁹¹ Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (2): 219; Pevsner, *South Somerset*, 354; *Misc. gen. et her.*, n.s., 4: 96, 1884. He was also a contributor, in the amount of £9.10s., to the repair of Bath Abbey.

had occurred in a period of almost two centuries. This was an age in which men built schools and almshouses, not parish churches.

The great outlay for church building in Somerset in our period was made on the Bath Abbey Church. The conventional church of the abbey was in a ruinous state at the close of the fifteenth century and its rebuilding was undertaken by Oliver King,¹⁹² Bishop of Bath and Wells, and William Bird,¹⁹³ who had been instituted prior in 1499. The revenues of the bishopric, of the abbey, and of these two great ecclesiastics were poured into the work of reconstruction, which had not yet been completed, an estimated £3,500 having been spent, at the time of Bird's death in 1525. A decade later the monastery was dissolved and in 1543 was granted by the Crown to a private purchaser who in turn sold the site and buildings to another individual. The church was stripped of everything vendible and was then given on petition to the municipality of Bath as the parish church for the community.¹⁹⁴ The reconstruction of the church was under steady discussion in Bath for many years, and a number of small bequests, doubtless used for emergency repairs, were made towards this end during the later sixteenth century. But the great effort for what amounted to the rebuilding of the church was to wait for upwards of sixty years until there had been at least some slight ebbing in the tide of secularism.

The reconstruction of the church was begun under the leadership of Thomas Bellott, steward of the royal household, whose foundation of a hospital at Bath has already been noted,¹⁹⁵ and under the direction of James Montague, who was Bishop of Bath and Wells from 1608 to 1616, and who gave £1,000 from his own estate towards the roofing of the church.¹⁹⁶ Both men were well connected throughout England and a sustained effort was made, with great success, to secure contributions from many parts of the realm for this continuous and certainly expensive undertaking. We have noted that perhaps as much as £3,500 had been spent on the re-edification of the church in the early years of the sixteenth century; almost exactly this amount, £3,488.13s., is recorded as having been contributed between 1608 and 1622 for the further repair and reconstruction of the church.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹² PCC 31 Blamyr 1503; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 44-47, 1903.

¹⁹³ *Vide ante*, 73.

¹⁹⁴ *VCH, Somerset* 2: 77-78; Peach, R. E., *Rambles about Bath*, 17-19, London, 1876; Society of Antiquaries of London, *Plan of the Abbey Church of Bath*, 7, London, 1798; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (1): 56-57.

¹⁹⁵ *Vide ante*, 60.

¹⁹⁶ PCC 71 Meade 1618; Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (1): 59-60, 70; *DNB*.

¹⁹⁷ Fuller tells us that the earlier years of the collections were not too productive (*Worthies* 3: 89): "For the repairing . . . collections were made all over the land, in the reign of

We have noted gifts or bequests from a total of eighty-two donors to the repair fund for Bath Abbey Church, in amounts ranging from a few shillings to Montague's great gift of £1,000. These men and women were drawn from ten counties of the realm, most of them being members of the landed aristocracy, though there was a leaven of local Somerset gifts contributed by a more representative stratum of the society of the age. At least a few of these contributions might be mentioned. In ca. 1612 gifts were received from Anne, Countess Dowager of Dorset, of £50 for a window in the church, from Francis Babb, Esq., of Chew for the same purpose, from the Hopton family of Witham Friary in the amount of £160 for the purchase of the great bell, from a Bath alderman, Thomas Power, two gifts totaling £12.10s. for general repairs, from Sir Robert Riche an estimated £40 for a window, and from Lady Elizabeth Hunsdon approximately £20 for the glazing of windows.¹⁹⁸ Gifts of this sort and roughly within this range of amount continued to come to hand from year to year until the great work had been completed. But this major effort had absorbed far too much of the energies, both in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, of a county in which the fabric of existing parochial churches was being sadly neglected and in which almost no church building was carried on.

D. THE STRUCTURE OF CHARITIES IN THE PARISHES

The parish was the central unit of English life and experience in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In it were to be found the institutions and the social forces which bore most intimately and effectively on the individual and which molded the whole of his life. The consequence was that most charitable endowments or gifts were dedicated to the creation of new institutions of social or cultural change within a particular parish, or to the strengthening of older institutional resources within the parish. The parish, therefore, is of special interest to us in that we find in it the effective translation of the aspirations of a benefactor into institutions which could and did reshape the whole life of a community and, not infrequently, of the surrounding communities as well. Hence, though our discussion and our data are necessarily presented in terms of the larger complex of the county, it must be remembered that social progress in our period was most uneven. Certain parishes were favored by the accident of the birth there of a boy who was to make his fortune in London, by the presence of a lord of the manor whose own life was

Queen Elizabeth, though inconsiderable, either in themselves, or through the corruption of others." But he praises Bellott's generosity and attests that "vast sums" were disbursed under Bishop Montague towards the completion of the church.

¹⁹⁸ *Misc. gen. et her.*, n.s., 4: 82, 84, 95-96, 106, 1888.

deeply rooted in the community and whose family undertook large and decisive responsibilities for the betterment of the parish, or by the fortunate appointment of a zealous and pertinacious clergyman who strove to engender a sense of community responsibility and to implant amongst his charges a dedication to the new aspirations with which England was stirring in this period. Thus the attainments, the institutions, of one parish might by 1660 stand in the most marked and dramatic contrast to the next, in which the catalyst of charitable endowments had simply never been supplied.

We have already suggested that the parochial structure of Somerset was well developed at the beginning of our period, though throughout these years new parishes were being formed, boundaries were being changed, and new free chapels were being organized which were in time to achieve parochial status. We have taken a count in 1560 as being approximately accurate for purposes of the present analysis. At that time there seem to have been 395 parish churches in Somerset and 74 chapels to which we have somewhat arbitrarily assigned the local value of parishes.¹⁹⁹ In all, therefore, we are concerned with the distribution and the use of a large and complex charitable total for the entire county amongst 469 local units in which men and women in this period found their institutions centered, their spiritual and their social life focused.

The total of charitable contributions in Somerset during our period was £116,531.16s., the distribution of which among a variety of uses we have just finished examining. Some thousands of pounds of this amount cannot, however, be regarded as designated for the use or benefit of particular parishes, with the result that we are concerned in this analysis with the distribution of funds totaling £111,495.19s. amongst the parochial units of the county.²⁰⁰ This large sum was spread among a total of 456 of the parishes of the county, or 97.2 per cent of all the local entities comprising Somerset. In the somewhat meaningless terms of averages, therefore, £237.14s.8d. had during the course of our period been given to each parish, though, as we shall note, the amount had been disbursed most unevenly over the length and breadth of the county. In thirteen thinly populated communities, all of which were chapelries in 1560, we have been able to discover no charitable benefaction of any kind during the

¹⁹⁹ *Vide ante*, 71. The *Valor Ecclesiasticus* indicates that there were 384 rectories and vicarages in 1535.

²⁰⁰ The totals by the large charitable heads for the county as a whole and by parishes may be compared:

	County totals		Parish totals	
	£	s	£	s
Poor	50,500.18.	(43.34%)	48,876.11.	(43.84%)
Social rehabilitation	3,101. 2.	(2.66%)	2,915. 9.	(2.61%)
Municipal betterments	905.15.	(0.78%)	845.10.	(0.76%)
Education	30,158. 7.	(25.88%)	28,642. 2.	(25.69%)
Religion	31,865.14.	(27.35%)	30,216. 7.	(27.10%)
	£116,531.16s.		£111,495.19s.	

whole course of our period, while in forty-six other parishes the total of charitable gifts in each amounted to £1 or less and none of them possessed charitable endowments at the close of our period.

We have elsewhere suggested that any English parish in this age enjoying charitable endowments of as much as £400 was most highly favored. This was an amount quite sufficient to build and endow an excellent grammar school, to ensure the relief of the poor in all save heavily populated urban parishes, and to establish a large and useful workhouse or almshouse. The income of perhaps £20 available from such an endowment year after year for the disciplined purposes prescribed by the donor was during this period a very considerable and certainly an effective sum wherewith the translation of the institutions of a parish to modernity could be ensured or wherewith new and powerful institutions of social change could be created and maintained. Such parishes may properly be regarded as "areas of opportunity" during our period, as laboratories for social experimentation which were to bring to bear extraordinarily effective pressures on nearby parishes which did not possess the lectureship, the almshouse, the grammar school, or any one of a number of possible institutions with which the favored parish was blessed. It will be well, therefore, to examine with some care this group of particularly favored parishes in Somerset.

There were in all forty-one parishes enjoying such abundant and effective resources.²⁰¹ While they included all the urban centers of consequence, they numbered as well at least thirty essentially rural parishes with no more than a village or a small market town at their center. This group of parishes, comprising only 8.7 per cent of all the parochial units of the county, was vested with almost 84 per cent of the total of its charitable funds. They were rather evenly distributed geographically and of course included the four towns of the county which in our period possessed an urban character. Thus Bruton, Bath, Taunton, and Wells were all endowed with institutions of considerable strength in terms of the new social aspirations of the era, their charitable resources totaling £46,608.18s., or almost exactly 40 per cent of the whole of the endowments of the county. Twelve of these favored communities possessed one or more adequately endowed almshouses, fifteen of them had free and endowed grammar schools by the close of our period, and thirty-three possessed endowments in excess of £200 for one or another form of poor relief.

Quite typical, and not far from the mean, of this favored group was Orchard Portman, a large and sprawling rural parish lying directly to the south of Taunton and sharing in certain of the educational and almshouse foundations of that town. The manor

²⁰¹ *Vide table 3 (Appendix).*

came into the hands of the Orchard family during the reign of Henry III and thence to the Portman family in the fifteenth century when Walter Portman, Esq., married the surviving daughter and heir of William Orchard.²⁰² The manor remained in the possession of this prolific and occasionally distinguished family during the whole of our period, and it is to their generosity that most of its charities are due. There was in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries no other village in this completely rural parish save Orchard Portman itself.

The total of the charitable funds accumulated in Orchard Portman during our period was £912.9s., of which almost the whole was for the relief of the poor. As we have said, the great bulk of this amount was the result of the generosity of the Portman family, there being in all only ten donors. The charitable traditions of the parish were established by John Portman, Esq., who on his death in 1521 left bequests comprising £2 for church repairs, £1.10s. for the general use of the church, 7s. to the clergy, and £1 to monasteries, as well as 10s. for the relief of prisoners.²⁰³ About a decade later a husbandman of the parish bequeathed 7s. for church repairs and an equal amount for the general needs of his church.²⁰⁴ During the reign of Mary Tudor the first eminent member of the Portman family, Sir William, a lawyer who had been knighted by Edward VI and appointed Chief Justice in 1554, remembered his native parish with a bequest of £20 for the relief of the poor and a modest outright sum of £1 to the clergyman there.²⁰⁵ Three small bequests from local husbandmen followed during the next generation: typical is that of George King who in 1585 left 3s. for the outright relief of the poor of the parish and 5s. for religious uses.²⁰⁶ The great benefaction to the parish, as we have previously noted, was made by the second Sir William Portman (ca. 1610–1648), who had been educated at Wadham College, Oxford, and at the Middle Temple. He had been appointed Sheriff of Somerset in 1637 and served in the Long Parliament until the outbreak of the Civil War, when he espoused the royal cause. He was captured at Naseby, died in the Tower, and was buried at Orchard Portman. Portman had for some years spent annually £90 for binding out poor children from Orchard Portman and other parishes in Somerset and Dorset in which his family lands were situated. In ca. 1643

²⁰² Collinson, *Somerset* 3: 274.

²⁰³ PCC 16 Maynwaryng 1521; *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 19: 211–212, 1903. Portman left a manor (Orchard Portman), lands in Dorset, and bequests totaling £86.

²⁰⁴ Weaver, F. W., ed., *Wells wills*, 113, London, 1890.

²⁰⁵ PCC 5 Wrastley 1556; Sixsmith, R. A., *A history of Thurlbear*, 21, Taunton, Mounter, 1957; *DNB*. He was one of the trustees of William Walbye's educational endowment (*vide ante*, 62).

²⁰⁶ PCC 2 Brudenell 1585.

he built an almshouse in the parish of Staple Fitzpaine, lying just south of Orchard Portman, at a cost of something more than £110, which he endowed with rent-charges totaling £40 p.a. The foundation was for the benefit of the poor of Orchard Portman and three adjoining parishes which likewise lay within the orbit of Portman's interest.²⁰⁷ Some years earlier Sir Hugh Portman, the brother of Sir William, had on his death left £5 to the poor of the parish as well as £20 for the relief of the poor of neighboring Taunton.²⁰⁸ The charitable benefactions of the parish were completed during the period of the Protectorate by a capital gift made by a local yeoman of £20 for the poor and a small bequest of £1.6s. for church repairs.

There were in addition fifty-one parishes in the county in which the accumulation of charitable endowments in the course of our period ranged from £100 to £400. These were, with possibly two exceptions, all typically rural parishes dominated by a small village, having modest populations and extremely simple economic organization. The charitable funds of these parishes ranged from the £100 for Gasper (Norton Ferris),²⁰⁹ left as an endowment for the poor of that place by a London benefactor, to the substantial total of £398.4s. with which South Petherton was favored. The average of charitable funds for this group of communities was surprisingly high, £192.8s.4d., and the median parish was Cutcombe, where the total given to charity was £182.3s., including £110.10s. for poor relief, £66.16s. for social rehabilitation, and £4.17s. for the support of the parish church. The total resources of these fifty-one parishes reached the substantial sum of £9,813.4s., and we may believe that, when their population and rural character are taken in account, they too may in a very proper sense be regarded as "areas of opportunity," in which by 1660 adequate provision had been made for the institutions whereby the liberal society was to be constituted.

In all, then, there were ninety-two of these favored parishes, well distributed throughout the county and in many instances offering direct help through grammar-school or almshouse endowments to nearby and less fortunate communities. These parishes as a group comprised not quite a fifth (19.6 per cent) of the total number of parish entities in Somerset and disposed rather more than nine-tenths (92.37 per cent) of all its charitable funds. They possessed the very large total of £107,644.1s. of charitable resources, leaving no more than £8,887.15s. for the remaining 377 parishes, in which charitable sums ranging from 9d. to £100 have been noted. As we have earlier observed, no contribution of any amount has been found in thirteen remote parishes of the county, while in another forty-

²⁰⁷ *Vide ante*, 58.

²⁰⁸ PCC 51 Audley 1632.

²⁰⁹ This hamlet was in Somerset, though part of the parish of Stourton in Wiltshire.

six the total did not come to as much as £1. These fifty-nine communities, all thinly populated and in the main chapelries, were the truly blighted areas of the county. There remain a large number of rural parishes and chapelries, numbering 318 in all, amongst which the not inconsiderable total of £8,856.10s. in charitable endowments are found. These communities possessed the really amazingly high average of £27.17s. of charitable endowments, the income on which in a sparsely populated and rural community in this era was not without its effect in alleviating poverty and in attracting later and larger endowments as the tradition of charitable giving became more firmly established.

The effectiveness as well as the geographical spread of two centuries of charitable effort in Somerset may be further tested by an examination of the amounts left for the relief of poverty in the various parishes. In all, as we have observed, the large total of £50,500.18s. was provided for the various forms of poor relief.²¹⁰ We may with some certainty assume that even densely populated urban parishes possessing £400 or more of endowments for the care of the poor were able to meet their normal obligations as men of the age sensed them and that the more typical parishes of the realm, such as those in Somerset, with endowments ranging from £200 to £400 were quite as fully able to discharge their responsibilities save in periods of economic crisis. And we may conclude that smaller and more thinly populated rural parishes with such endowments in the range of £10 to £200 had made at least an impressive beginning towards the care of the indigent, if not towards the rehabilitation of the worthy poor.

In Somerset there was a surprisingly large group of twenty-nine parishes, well distributed across the breadth of the county, with endowments for the relief of the poor ranging upwards from £400. The smallest of these capital amounts was for Chew Magna (£423.17s.), while eleven of these communities possessed funds for the care of the poor totaling more than £1,000 each in 1660. Every town of really urban character in the county was included. Taunton, by far the largest town, had most generous resources totaling £10,938.12s. for poor relief, while Bruton, Wells, and Bath were relatively perhaps as strongly buttressed by accumulated benefactions as they grappled with the chronic problems of poverty and indigence. This group of parishes was in a sense almost too heavily endowed, since there was vested in them a total of £41,470 of capital funds for poor relief, comprising 82.12 per cent of the total of these resources in the whole county.

Another group of eleven parishes possessed resources

²¹⁰ It should be said that of this total, £4,352 was in the form of gifts for individual use, i.e., doles. But for purposes of this analysis the whole is regarded as a capital sum.

of from £200 to £400 for the care of the poor. These endowments ranged from the precise total of £200 for Batheaston to the £311.14s. held by Trull for the relief of indigence. All these parishes were small communities in our period and it seems probable that they were sufficiently endowed. They held as a group £2,615.6s. of funds devoted to the care of the poor, with an average of slightly less than £237.15s.1d., the median figure being that of £225.3s. for Yeovil.

Even more interesting, and certainly more typical, were 126 rural parishes possessing endowments for poor relief ranging in amount from £10 to £200. These communities are dotted all over Somerset and as a group they held £5,621.4s. of endowments for the relief of their poor, or the quite substantial average of £44.12s.3d. for each of these parishes, which together comprised somewhat more than a fourth of all those in the county.

In all, then, there were 166 parishes within the county which were by 1660 so fortunately provided with endowments for the care of the poor that they were probably able to assume their responsibilities for poor relief from the income on invested funds save in periods of general economic distress. These parishes numbered somewhat more than a third (35 per cent) of those in the county, they included all the populous areas of Somerset, and they could in numerous cases because of the instruction of the donor lend substantial aid to nearby and less favored parishes as well. These highly favored parishes held £49,706.10s., or 98.43 per cent of all the endowments for poor relief in the county, leaving but a scant £794.8s. for the remaining 303 parishes. In these latter areas were to be found the regions of "social blight" in the Somerset of our period.

E. THE IMPACT OF LONDON ON THE COUNTY

Somerset on its nearest border lay a full hundred miles to the west of London. It belonged to the west of England and was, particularly in the early decades of our period, without strong economic ties to the capital city. Burgeoning Bristol lay at hand, its economic and cultural influences more closely felt, and it aspired throughout our period to effect its leadership over the great western area of which Somerset was so importantly part. As the cloth trade developed towards the close of the sixteenth century, however, commercial relations with the metropolis became more intimate and there was in the course of the seventeenth century a marked improvement in road communications. But in Somerset, as in the other counties we have examined, the really important links between London and the county were in the young men who had gone to the metropolis as apprentices and who, having made their fortunes there, remembered their native parish in the closing years of their lives or in their wills. These

men were numerous, they were principally stalwart Protestants, and their aspirations were cast in a common mold as they gave so largely towards the constitution of the charitable institutions of their native county.

These London donors gave in all the great total of £30,360.6s. for the needs of their native county, as compared with the almost trivial sum of £159 which Bristol donors gave towards its needs. This sum represented rather more than a quarter (26.05 per cent) of the whole of Somerset's charitable funds and stands relatively high in the proportion of London wealth given to the counties with which we are concerned.²¹¹ It should likewise be noted that almost the whole (96.78 per cent) of these London benefactions were in the decisively useful form of endowments and that they were without exception carefully and prudently established by deeds of gift or by will in the form of sagaciously devised trusts. These were the gifts of men whose aspirations were clearly and quite specifically defined and who possessed the knowledge and the resources wherewith to ensure that their wishes would be carried out in perpetuity.

This large sum was the gift of sixty-nine individual London donors, of whom fifty-nine made their benefactions at a date later than the mid-Elizabethan period (1580). The scale of their giving is suggested by the fact that these donors numbered 1.9 per cent of all the benefactors of the county, while their gifts constituted more than a fourth (26.05 per cent) of the total of Somerset's charitable resources for our entire period. The benefactions of these London men were on the whole very large, the average being exactly £440 for the group, despite the fact that twenty were less than £50 in amount. The donors were drawn principally from the mercantile aristocracy of the city, thirty-three of their number having been merchants and most of these identified in some manner with the cloth trade. There were seventeen tradesmen, eleven of whom were also connected with the cloth industry, while eight were members of the professions, four of the clergy, and seven of unknown status; of this last group, all were almost certainly either tradesmen or lesser merchants. Their tie with the county was very close indeed, fifty-one of the group having been born in Somerset, while another five were bound to the county which had been the birthplace of a parent or wife. Three of the group were certainly born in other counties but held real property in Somerset. The birthplace and the connection of the remaining ten are uncertain, but it seems probable that they were natives of the county who simply failed to mention the fact in their wills or deeds of gift.

²¹¹ *Vide ante*, 19, n. 24, for a listing of the proportion of total charitable wealth derived from London gifts in all the counties under study.

Not only were the London gifts to Somerset notable in amount, but they exhibited a markedly different quality of aspiration from those of the county at large. This statement may perhaps best be supported by setting out in tabular form the proportions given for the various charitable heads by Londoners and by men of the county:

	Poor	Social rehabilitation	Municipal betterments	Education	Religion
	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
County at large	50,500.18. (43.34%)	3,101. 2. (2.66%)	905.15. (0.78%)	30,158. 7. (25.88%)	31,865.14. (27.35%)
London gifts to county	17,001.10. (56.00%)	588.13. (1.94%)	93. 0. (0.31%)	8,661. 6. (28.53%)	4,015.17. (13.23%)

The interest of these Londoners was predominantly in the plight of the poor of the county, to alleviate which they gave the generous total of £17,001.10s., including the endowment of six of the county's almshouses. To state it another way, precisely one-third of all the great sum provided for the poor of the county was given by this small group of London benefactors, who gave 56 per cent of all their benefactions for the relief of poverty. These men gave rather less proportionately than the county towards schemes of social rehabilitation and municipal betterment, but they were more deeply concerned with the educational needs of Somerset than were men of the county, since their total of benefactions for this purpose was £8,661.6s., or 28.53 per cent of the whole of their gifts as compared with 25.88 per cent for the county at large. And, finally, their concern with the religious needs of the county was slight indeed, since they gave only 13.23 per cent of all their benefactions for this purpose, as contrasted with 27.35 per cent for the county in general.

London benefactions, therefore, possessed a qualitative strength which made them particularly effective in ordering the new social and cultural institutions of the county. They tended to be large enough and to be vested with such skill and prudence that, whether it was a lectureship, an apprenticeship plan, or an almshouse that was being endowed, the community chosen by the donor very quickly and certainly very visibly found its whole structure of life profoundly altered and improved. These great London endowments were not scattered over the whole of the county but were concentrated effectively in a small number of parishes which not infrequently served as models for subsequent Somerset donors as they planned their own contributions to its welfare. The decisive effectiveness of these London gifts can best be examined by an analysis of their impact on individual parishes. We shall first note a group of favored parishes, with charitable endowments of more than £400, in which the funds were wholly or principally the gift of local or

county donors,²¹² and then a second group in which it is clear that London wealth and generosity were responsible for the creation and the structure of local institutions.

These twenty-four communities, including only one of the large towns of the county, possessed substantial funds totaling £47,711.16s., or slightly more than 40 per cent of the whole for the county. It will be observed that London's contribution to the accumulation of these endowments was insignificant. These were parishes and towns whose charities were principally the gift of the gentry of the county, save for the heavy contribution of great clergymen to the religious establishments at Glastonbury and Wells. A closer analysis reveals that, considering these communities as a group, and excluding Wadham's great university foundation, which has necessarily been credited to Ashill, a very heavy proportion of the religious gifts and endowments of the county are found in these communities, reflecting the more conservative aspirations of the rural aristocracy. These parishes may be regarded as typical of the charitable sentiments of men and women whose roots were solidly planted in the soil and aspirations of Somerset.

But there is a second group of communities, including all the large towns save Wells and particularly those towns linked to London by the ties of the cloth

²¹² Parishes with substantial charities relatively unaffected by London gifts:

	Charities from local or county sources	Charities from London sources	Total
	£ s	£ s	£ s
Ashill	15,500.14.		15,500.14.
Backwell	729.15.		729.15.
Bishop's Lydeard	577. 4.	5. 0.	582. 4.
Cannington	660.18.	14.14.	675.12.
Chard	499.15.		499.15.
Chew Magna	662.14.		662.14.
Coker (East and West)	705. 3.		705. 3.
Compton Dando	637. 8.	50. 0.	687. 8.
Crewkerne	1,825.15.	2.19.	1,828.14.
Crocombe	1,078.16.		1,078.16.
Curry (East and North)	940.11.		940.11.
Fivehead	1,098.17.		1,098.17.
Glastonbury	2,220. 5.		2,220. 5.
Ilminster	1,317.19.		1,317.19.
Ilton	1,293.11.		1,293.11.
Mells	638.15.		638.15.
Minehead	788. 4.	9. 0.	797. 4.
Orchard Portman	912. 9.		912. 9.
Somerton	1,131. 0.		1,131. 0.
Staple Fitzpaine	1,123. 9.		1,123. 9.
Stogursey	816. 8.		816. 8.
Wells	11,488.14.	71.13.	11,560. 7.
Widcombe	400.15.		400.15.
Wootton Courtney	509.11.		509.11.
	£47,558.10s.	£153. 6s.	£47,711.16s.

trade, in which a dramatically different structure of giving and source of giving may be observed. These are the towns whose social and charitable institutions were to be constituted principally or at least in part by the benefactions of men who, being natives of these parishes, had made their fortunes in the city and who, as they ordered their affairs at the close of their lives, sought to provide for these communities the institutions which the merchant class of London were creating to ensure the triumph of their aspirations for mankind.²¹³

This group of eighteen communities includes all the then principal towns in Somerset, and particularly those possessing close commercial ties with London. The charitable endowments of these especially favored communities constituted 43.30 per cent of the total for the entire county. They are distributed quite evenly over the county, though London's interest in them was principally the consequence of the genetic accident of the birth of a successful London merchant or clothier within their borders. In these eighteen communities considerably more than half (58.26 per cent) of all the charitable funds accumulated were gifts from London, normally in large endowments securing the foundation of a school, an almshouse, or a scheme for the relief of poverty. It is likewise significant that London's great contribution of £30,360.6s. to the charities of the county was almost wholly (96.81 per cent) concentrated in these favored communities. These benefactions were massively secular in their nature, they were effectively and most prudently ordered, and they established in these communities the fabric of social responsibility and cultural progress.

²¹³ Parishes with substantial charities decisively affected by London benefactions:

	Charities from local or county sources	Charities from London sources	Total
	£ s	£ s	£ s
Bath	6,730.19.	1,985. 0.	8,715.19.
Bridgwater	1,214. 3.	671. 0.	1,885. 3.
Broadway	50. 4.	720. 0.	770. 4.
Bruton	1,564. 1.	8,722. 0.	10,286. 1.
Donyatt	4.19.	1,060. 0.	1,064.19.
East Harptree	439. 2.	250.17.	689.19.
Frome	554.15.	1,143.12.	1,698. 7.
Keynsham	1,269. 0.	991. 0.	2,260. 0.
Langport	210. 0.	200. 0.	410. 0.
Long Ashton	462.11.	1,404. 3.	1,866.14.
Newton St. Loe	0. 3.	600. 0.	600. 3.
Shepton Mallet	82. 1.	572. 0.	654. 1.
South Petherton	98. 4.	300. 0.	398. 4.
Stanton Drew	140.13.	200. 0.	340.13.
Stoke	1.17.	420. 0.	421.17.
Taunton	7,630. 6.	8,416. 5.	16,046.11.
Wellington	191. 3.	1,537. 0.	1,728. 3.
Wiveliscombe	416.18.	200. 0.	616.18.
	£21,060.19s.	£29,392.17s.	£50,453.16s.

F. THE IMPACT OF THE COUNTY ON THE NATION

We have observed that Somerset benefited greatly from the almost prodigal generosity of London in this period, a generosity which took the whole of the nation and its needs in view. But in its own giving, benefactions to the universities aside in this as in other counties, Somerset was extraordinarily parochial in its interests. The relatively very small sum of £1,019.5s. was provided for the charitable needs of other counties in the course of our long period by no more than fifty-eight individual donors. This amount is 0.87 per cent of the total of the charitable benefactions of the county, which is, Bristol aside, decidedly the lowest proportion of extra-county giving for any of the counties studied, and very probably the lowest for the whole of England.²¹⁴ The concern of Somerset's donors scarcely extended beyond the counties, including Bristol, on which it bordered, and then only to very small gifts and bequests. This suggests not only the cultural insularity of the county during our period, but likewise the intense interest of Somerset men in local needs which had not yet been fully met.

The benefactions made outside the county borders may be briefly tabulated:

County	Number of donors	Total of benefactions
Bristol	5	355. 3.
Cornwall	1	2. 0.
Devon	13	130.13.
Dorset	11	45.17.
Hampshire	5	15.17.
Kent	1	2. 0.
London (Middlesex)	7	143.19.
Norfolk	1	3. 0.
Oxfordshire	1	10. 0.
Shropshire	2	6. 7.
Suffolk	1	150. 0.
Surrey	1	3. 7.
Sussex	1	133.10.
Wiltshire	6	13.12.
Wales	2	4. 0.
	58	1,019.5

Save for one early gift by a member of the upper gentry to a monastery in Sussex and a substantial bequest by Bishop Still to Suffolk, these benefactions were relatively small. In all, £838.6s. of these gifts were for poor relief, constituting 82.25 per cent of the whole sum. The whole amount was built up in large part by gifts from landholders, of all classes, residing on the borders of the county, to parishes in adjoining counties in which they held land or in which they had found their wives. Similarly, most of the contributions to the charitable needs of Bristol, amounting to

²¹⁴ The range for our group of counties is from 0.79 per cent for Bristol to the incredibly large proportion of 30.95 per cent for London. *Vide ante*, 20, n.28, for further particulars.

£355.3s., were for the poor of that city and were, with one exception, the gift of nearby landholders. The central preoccupation of the county, quite as truly as in Bristol, remained in a very real and almost exclusive sense with its own problems and aspirations.

G. THE STRUCTURE OF CLASS ASPIRATIONS

Somerset was predominantly rural throughout the period under study. It was a region with a strong and a well-vested gentry who retained through the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries a dominant role in the life and economy of their parishes. It possessed no rich or numerous merchant or tradesman class save in three or four small urban centers. Wells and, until the Reformation, Glastonbury were important ecclesiastical centers, exercising a steadily conservative influence on the thought and institutions of the county. In Somerset, then, we have an almost classically rural county, remote from London, conservative in its social organization, and intensely insular in its principal preoccupations. Nonetheless, as we shall now observe, the powerful solvents of change were at work within its life and economy. Classes were in flux and new donors were to assume a greater and then a predominant responsibility for the institutions and the structure of life in the county as we move into the decades just prior to the outbreak of social and political revolution in 1640.

There were 3,629 identifiable individual donors to the charities of Somerset. As we have seen, these benefactors gave in all £116,531.16s. for philanthropic purposes, or a relatively low average of £32.2s.3d. for each donor.²¹⁵ We have been able to establish the social status of 3,217 of these men and women, or 88.65 per cent of the whole number. The remaining 412 individuals, more than 100 of whom were widows, were principally rural persons whose benefactions in amount and stated purpose would suggest an average social status slightly higher than that of the yeoman class. There were as well 68 town dwellers whose contributions would suggest an economic and social status almost precisely comparable to that of the tradesmen as a group.

The predominantly rural structure of the county is indicated by the fact that 2,711 of the identified donors were members of the several rural classes, counting the lower clergy as a group as rural dwellers. This very high proportion, 74.70 per cent, is further increased to 84.18 per cent if the unidentified rural donors (344) are added, as they should be. This proportion establishes Somerset as one of the most completely rural counties in the realm. There were as well 570 urban donors, the social status of 502 of whom is known, constituting in all 15.71 per cent of the whole number of charitable benefactors for the county.

²¹⁵ The range of average benefactions in our ten counties is wide, from the £ 28.4s.6d. for Yorkshire to the £ 255.12s.2d. for London.

Of this number, a small proportion is represented by the 69 London benefactors who were to exercise such a dominant influence on the life and social institutions of their native county. The remaining urban dwellers were found in the several market towns of the county, the 160 from Taunton comprising by far the largest single urban group.

The rural groups, amounting as we have noted to 74.70 per cent of all *known* donors, contributed in total substantially less than half (45.33 per cent) of the charitable benefactions of the county. In contrast, the urban dwellers of *known* social status, comprising only 13.83 per cent of all donors, gave almost precisely (45.15 per cent) the same proportion of the charitable endowments of the county.²¹⁶ This is an amazing fact when one takes into account the rural character of the county and is of course almost entirely explained by the huge contribution of the small but extremely generous group of London benefactors. A closer examination of the structure of giving in Somerset makes it clear that three relatively small classes of men were principally responsible for the development of the social institutions of the county during our period: the upper clergy, whose gifts were largely made in the first third of our period; the gentry, whose influence was strongest in the middle third; and the merchants and tradesmen, who were to assert dominance in the building of Somerset's institutions during the final third of our period. These three groups comprised only 20.39 per cent of all known donors, yet they gave in total substantially more than two-thirds of the whole of the charitable funds of the county.²¹⁷ Thus the gentry, who probably constituted not more than 2 per cent of the population of the county, comprised 12.62

²¹⁶ The contributions of the Crown and of all donors of unidentified status are being ignored for purposes of this comparison.

²¹⁷ The following table may prove of interest in connection with this analysis:

Number of donors in the class	Social status	Percentage of all county gifts	Percentage of county persons	Amount given
4	Crown	0.98	0.11	1,139. 0.
16	Nobility	2.45	0.44	2,853.11.
90	Upper gentry	10.60	2.48	12,350. 5.
368	Lower gentry	23.08	10.14	26,899. 0.
764	Yeomen	2.87	21.05	3,343. 6.
1,302	Husbandmen	0.56	35.88	640.14.
19	Upper clergy	12.24	0.52	14,264. 8.
171	Lower clergy	5.77	4.71	6,718. 5.
92	Merchants	17.79	2.54	20,735.17.
171	Tradesmen	4.18	4.71	4,876.18.
64	Burgers	1.77	1.76	2,062. 7.
123	Artisans	0.12	3.39	135.14.
33	Professions	9.05	0.91	10,547. 9.
412	Unidentified	8.55	11.35	9,965. 2.
3,629				£116,531.16s.

per cent of all known donors and contributed the very large proportion of 33.68 per cent of all the charitable endowments of our period. Even more remarkably, the merchants and tradesmen, including those who can be identified only as burghers, who could not have constituted more than a tiny proportion of the population of Somerset in this age, as a group represented 9.01 per cent of all charitable donors and gave almost one-fourth (23.74 per cent) of all benefactions. And, finally, it should be noted that a considerable proportion of the number and of the contributions of persons of unknown status, comprising 11.35 per cent of all donors and 8.55 per cent of all charitable funds, must have belonged to one or another of these two predominant groups, the gentry and the merchants.

The degree of social responsibility assumed by any class obviously bears a close relation to the wealth of the group, and more specifically to its liquid and disposable wealth. To a very large extent we may believe that the merchants and tradesmen of our period rose so rapidly to power and fixed their aspirations so successfully on society because their wealth tended to be liquid or could easily and without undue sacrifice be converted into liquid assets. The gentry, and more particularly the nobility, found themselves hampered in an inflationary era by landholdings which were not easily liquidated or alienated and which were not in a full sense capital assets at all because of the legal, the customary, and the sentimental impairments which lay on the title to or on the use of their land. These questions of comparative wealth, especially of liquid wealth, bear most importantly on the metamorphosis of social responsibility and of economic power which occurred in the course of our period and on the capacity of the several classes of men to assume their due burden of social and charitable responsibilities.²¹⁸

Yet when we seek to assess the relative dedication of men to the social and institutional needs of their age, we must understand that they gave as individuals rather than as members of the several social classes. More accurately, they gave as individuals, disciplined normally by the aspirations of their class and of their generation. There was an immense spread in the scale of giving by individual donors as wealth, intensity of interest, and personal purposefulness determined whether a gift would be nominal in amount or sufficient to found a permanently useful institution within the county favored by the donor. Hence it is important to analyze the "depth of giving" of donors of known social status in Somerset.²¹⁹

²¹⁸ *Vide* Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 330-337, for an extended discussion of this matter; and *vide ibid.*, 376-377, for particulars regarding the average worth of certain social classes in Somerset in the period under study.

²¹⁹ *Vide* Appendix (table 4) for the particulars. It should be mentioned here that there are two slight errors in table 4. The number of donors of known social status there listed as 3,216 should be 3,217, one member of the lower clergy having,

The great mass of gifts, from donors of every class, fell within the range of from 1*d.* to £9.19*s.*, while the total of gifts within these modest limits amounted to no more than 3.31 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth provided by donors of known status. This was nonetheless the measure of the generosity of 82.80 per cent of all men making charitable contribution. In other terms, a very large group of 2,663 benefactors gave in all no more than £3,523.16*s.* to the charitable resources of the county. This, then, was the extent of the generosity and participation of the great mass of men, drawn from all classes, though a gift of £9.19*s.* might well be not much more than nominal for a member of the upper gentry and the life savings of a fairly prosperous husbandman. Not surprisingly, within this range of generosity are to be found 99.62 per cent of all husbandmen and 92.54 per cent of all yeoman donors, but we find here as well about 63 per cent of all benefactors of the lower gentry, about the same proportion of the lower clergy, and more than two-thirds of the tradesmen.

A relatively very small proportion (4.38 per cent) of all donors made gifts in the next range, extending from £10 to £19.19*s.*, while the total of the contributions of these men and women amounted to no more than 1.76 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of the county. We may, indeed, observe that the measure of the generosity of slightly more than 87 per cent of all donors from all classes is to be discovered in the range from a token gift of a penny or so to just short of £20, though the total of their charity amounts to no more than 5.07 per cent of the great sum with which the basic social institutions of Somerset were fashioned in this period.

In the next range of giving, amounts between £20 and £99.19*s.*, we find a large proportion of capital sums, endowments which for the most part still usefully survive in Somerset today. It will be remembered that in terms of seventeenth-century purchasing power these were substantial charities, quite sufficient to ease the burden of poor relief in a rural parish or to create a modest apprenticeship endowment. There were 245 donors contributing within this range, 7.62 per cent of the whole number, who gave the substantial total of £10,055.10*s.* for various charitable uses, this amounting to 9.44 per cent of the charitable wealth of the county. It was in this scale of giving that the benefactions of generous rural donors were particularly heavily concentrated.

There was a surprisingly large number of donors in the next range of giving, from £100 to £499.19*s.*, the total of 124 such persons comprising 3.86 per cent of as it were, disappeared in the course of the compilation of the table. Further, the grand total of contributions overstates the true total by two shillings.

The reader may wish to consult the author's *Philanthropy in England*, 339-342, for a fuller analysis of "depth of giving" among English donors of the period, based on a study of three counties, Somerset being one.

all known benefactors. These men and women, with very few exceptions, vested capital sums, under carefully ordered deeds of trust, of sufficient strength decisively to affect the future social and cultural development of their communities. This group gave in all £24,330.14*s.* to the needs of their county, or 22.83 per cent of the whole. These donors were almost entirely drawn from the gentry (38.71 per cent), from the clergy (16.94 per cent), and from the highly responsible burgher groups (32.26 per cent), most of these last, of course, being London and Taunton benefactors.

Another very large sum, £18,120.1*s.*, this comprising exactly 17 per cent of the charitable endowments of the county, was given by a small group of twenty-five donors, constituting no more than 0.78 per cent of all benefactors. These men gave in the munificent range of from £500 to £999.19*s.*, in individual amounts quite sufficient to endow a strong and effective school or to found a large and useful almshouse. Here it is that we begin to discover the true center of gravity of socially important wealth in Somerset, here we discover the true pillars of the new society which was being built by the incredible generosity of the age with which we are concerned.

All this is even more clearly revealed as we consider the great benefactions of our period, those with a capital value of £1,000 or more. There were eighteen such benefactors in Somerset, accounting for only 0.56 per cent of the whole number, five of whom were merchants, four who were drawn from the several professions, as many from the upper clergy, four also from the gentry, and one from the nobility. In all, this tiny group of men gave the huge total of £48,661.10*s.* to the institutions and social needs of Somerset, this accounting for 45.66 per cent of the sum given by all benefactors of known social status. These were very large endowments indeed, amounting in average terms to slightly more than £2,703, capital gifts quite sufficient for the creation of great and enduring institutions. Though, as we have so frequently pointed out, this was an almost classically rural county, it is significant that half of these donors were members of the new urban classes, drawn from the ranks of the merchant aristocracy and from the professions, while the remainder were principally from the upper clergy and from the upper gentry. Though some thousands of men and women had made their due contribution, often at great personal sacrifices, it remained for this tiny group of donors to provide the ultimately important resources required for the completion of the grand design which men held so tenaciously and courageously for the betterment of the world in which they lived.

It is true that these men and women had given as individuals. At the same time, as we have earlier stressed, they tended as well to reflect the thrust of aspirations which at a particular season moved the class of which they were members. We should ac-

cordingly turn to a brief analysis of the structure of the charitable benefactions provided by the several classes of men for the institutions of the county. At the outset of this discussion it may be said that the Crown was a relatively unimportant benefactor to the county, there being only four royal grants totaling £1,139 of capital, all for grammar-school foundations, and amounting to 0.98 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of the county.

The nobility of the county, though relatively numerous, bore a most inconsiderable share of the responsibility for its needs and its social development. In all, sixteen members of this class made charitable contributions totaling £2,853.11s., or 2.45 per cent of the whole of the funds of the county, an amount somewhat less than was contributed by the yeomanry and not half so much as was provided by the lower clergy. Nor was the quality of the giving of this class impressive. Considerably more than half (53.55 per cent) of all their benefactions were for the endowment of prayers, which were charitable only in a marginal and often in an unintended sense, while the extremely large fraction of 86.51 per cent of all their gifts were made for religious purposes generally. They gave nothing to education, nothing to municipal betterments, and only nominal amounts (£190) for the poor and for experiments in social rehabilitation (£200). The nobility of Somerset were quite as inconsequential in terms of social and historical responsibility as they were in most of the counties comprehended in this study.

But this stricture can in no sense be leveled against the upper gentry of Somerset. A total of £12,350.5s. was given by ninety members of this class in the course of our period, or an average of £137.4s.6d. for each donor. This large contribution, amounting to about a tenth (10.60 per cent) of the total of the charitable resources of the county, was reasonably well distributed over all the charitable heads and over the whole extent of the two centuries under review. The spread of the interests of this class, as would be expected, was somewhat more conservative than that of the county as a whole. Thus they gave in all 41.69 per cent of their benefactions for the several forms of poor relief, a proportion only slightly less than that for the county at large. They gave somewhat less to social rehabilitation but, in percentage terms, rather more to the various municipal betterments of their communities. Their contribution to the educational resources of the county was proportionately markedly less than the county at large, while their interest in its religious needs consumed 42.93 per cent of all their charitable gifts as compared with something more than a quarter (27.35 per cent) for Somerset as a whole.

The charitable aspirations of the upper gentry underwent an interesting and a significant metamorphosis as our period developed, which can be best illustrated by the shifting of their concern for the religious needs of

their communities to the pressing and intensely secular problem of the cure, or more accurately, the alleviation, of poverty. Thus in the years prior to the Reformation, when not quite a third (31.38 per cent) of the total benefactions of the class were made, almost 80 per cent of all their gifts and bequests were for religious purposes, with the endowment of prayers absorbing almost two-thirds (62.24 per cent) of the total. The interest of the group in the relief of poverty was confined to funeral doles and rather haphazard outright gifts, the total of £82.5s. given for this purpose amounting to only 2.45 per cent of the whole of their benefactions of £3,875.4s. in this interval. Passing over the Tudor period, when the class seems to have been hard pressed financially and in a distinctly non-charitable mood, we find a most marked contrast during the first four decades of the seventeenth century, when nearly 39.95 per cent of the total benefactions of the class were made. In this period the contributions of the upper gentry to the relief of poverty absorbed 57.96 per cent of their total of £4,933.13s. of charitable giving, with almshouse endowments accounting for almost exactly half (50.87 per cent) of the whole. The requirements of religion, on the contrary, commanded only slightly more than a third (35.05 per cent) of their charities, with the needs of the clergy and the building of new or the renovation of old churches absorbing almost the whole of their religious contributions. The upper gentry, then, yielded more slowly than other classes to the demands of a new age, but they bore their burdens fully and with good grace, setting an admirable pattern of philanthropy for the other rural classes of the county.

The lower gentry of Somerset comprised a large and a very important group of benefactors. As we have noted, there were 368 members of the class who made charitable contributions during our period to a total amount of £26,899. Thus while this class numbered only 10.14 per cent of all donors, it contributed almost a fourth (23.08 per cent) of the total of the charitable funds of the county. It should be remarked that the whole structure of the charities of the class and of its massive contribution to the county are distorted by the huge university endowment of one of its number, Nicholas Wadham, whose great bequest of £14,000 we have earlier commented on at length. If this charity were withdrawn, the remainder given by the lower gentry would be almost exactly that given by the upper gentry and would be far less than the amount provided by the merchants. In all, however, the lower gentry of Somerset made a considerably larger total contribution to its charitable endowments than any other single social group and bore considerably greater proportionate responsibility for its charities than did members of this class in all the other counties in our study.²²⁰

The proportions vested by the lower gentry in the

²²⁰ The range for the eight rural counties is from 10.28 per cent for Hampshire to the 23.08 per cent for Somerset.

various charitable heads, which normally so accurately document the social and cultural aspirations of the group, are hopelessly distorted by Wadham's huge gift to education, which alone accounted for 52.05 per cent of the total benefactions of his class, and hence cannot profitably be explored except to point out the pitfalls of the statistical method in history. Thus it would appear that the overall contribution of the gentry to educational needs was of the order of 52.33 per cent of the whole of the charitable gifts of the class, whereas in point of fact the lower gentry of Somerset was notably, almost inexplicably, uninterested in the extension of educational opportunities. Wadham's gift aside, the contributions of the class for this purpose totaled merely 0.28 per cent of the whole of their gifts, comprising in all only £21.6s. for the support of schools and £54.12s. in gifts for scholarship purposes.

We gain a much clearer and certainly a much more accurate view of the shifting aspirations of the gentry when we consider the distribution of their charities during the various periods that comprise our study. In the years prior to the Reformation, the interests of this social group were almost exclusively religious. The lower gentry gave the considerable sum of £2,025.17s. to various philanthropic causes in the interval, of which the amazing proportion of 96.26 per cent was for one or another religious purpose. The founding of chantries and the endowment of other forms of prayers for the dead alone absorbed two-thirds (66.75 per cent) of all their gifts, while substantial sums were given as well for the general needs of the Church and for the maintenance of its fabric. In this same period only £54.17s., or 2.71 per cent of the whole, was given in funeral or testamentary doles for the poor, while the other great charitable heads were almost wholly neglected. In the Elizabethan era, a radically different orientation of charitable interests becomes evident. In these years, when the total charitable contributions of the gentry amounted to the modest sum of £1,325.2s., the needs of religion attracted 9.80 per cent of the whole of their gifts, with the repair of church fabric accounting for most of this slender total. On the other hand, the requirements of the poor commanded almost two-thirds (61.62 per cent) of their bequests, while the closely related opportunities for experimenting with plans for social rehabilitation alone received greater support (17.55 per cent) from the gentry than did religious uses. Ignoring the next period, in which Wadham's gift looms so large, save for the comment that in this interval (1601-1640) the gentry vested the very large total of £3,914.17s. in almshouse foundations, we observe that the secular trend noted under Elizabeth was fully continued during the period of political instability and Puritan experimentation. The poor received rather more than three-fourths (77.44 per cent) of all gifts in the revolutionary era, and a substantial sum was provided for stocks on which the poor might work. But

the needs of religion commanded only slightly more than 16 per cent of the total benefactions of the class. A revolutionary, almost a complete, shift in aspirations had truly taken place in this conservative class.

Though very numerous as donors, the yeomanry of Somerset played only a modest role in the building of the charitable institutions of the county. Their gifts were on the whole small, and only slightly more than a fourth (26.07 per cent) of their contribution of £3,343.6s. to the charities of the county was in capital amounts. There were 764 yeoman donors, whose average charitable gift was £4.7s.6d., and these men and women account for 2.87 per cent of the whole of the charities of the county while they numbered 21.05 per cent of its contributors. They were on balance, over the whole term of our study, considerably more concerned with the plight of the poor, whose problems they doubtless knew at first hand, than was the county at large, for 58.25 per cent of all their charities were designated for one or another kind of poor relief. Furthermore, members of the yeoman class gave 6.32 per cent of all their benefactions for the several experiments in social rehabilitation. In total, the yeomanry gave almost two-thirds (64.57 per cent) to these two secular purposes, whereas the county at large gave well under half (46 per cent) for these particular uses. At the same time, the interest of the yeomanry in education was very slight indeed, their contribution amounting to little more, for example, than the sum given for marriage subsidies; but they were consistently more devoted to the religious needs of the county than most other groups, having given over the whole period approximately one-third (33.16 per cent) of all their benefactions for this purpose.

The yeomanry of Somerset was of middling status in terms of their significance in the framing of the social institutions of their county. Their proportionate importance, they having given 2.87 per cent of all the charitable funds of the county, may be estimated when we compare this contribution with the 5.22 per cent given by men of this class in Yorkshire as the one extreme or the 1.02 per cent given by the class, never well developed, in Lancashire. They differ most decidedly from yeomen of other counties, as indeed do the lower gentry of Somerset, in their inexplicable disinterest in education, a social need which had so seriously concerned members of this class in every other county. The class rose early in Somerset, the surprising amount of £734.2s. having been given by its members prior to 1540. They gave approximately a fifth (20.93 per cent) of all their benefactions during the Tudor period and well over a third (34.62 per cent) during the period of their greatest prosperity in the four decades just before the outbreak of the Civil War.

There is abundant evidence to suggest that the yeomanry in the relatively poor rural county of Somerset were, on balance, much more closely allied in blood,

economic position, and social status with the husbandmen than with the lower gentry, quite contrary to the circumstances in several of the counties we have studied. This latter class, the husbandmen, in Somerset accounts for a large number of charitable donors, 1302 in all, comprising 35.88 per cent of all individuals whose social status can be determined. But the average contribution of men of this class was small, amounting to only 9s.10d., with the result that their total contribution of £640.14s. comprises only a tiny proportion (0.56 per cent) of the whole. Somewhat more than 40 per cent of the total of the benefactions of the class was made during the period of their greatest relative prosperity in the years just prior to the Reformation. The intense piety of the husbandmen is demonstrated by the incredible proportion of 99.65 per cent of all their contributions of £262.14s. given in these years for one or another religious use. Their habits of customary giving, principally for the general uses of the church, persisted even during the intensely secular Elizabethan decades, when 42.30 per cent of their gifts were made to the Church, though this interest was now overmatched by the 57.46 per cent provided for poor relief.

The yeomen and husbandmen of Somerset were throughout our period persistent, though small, donors to the charitable needs of the county. They were, as well, conservative benefactors in the sense that they were disposed to lend their support to the religious needs of their communities long after richer and more powerful classes of men had transferred their interests to the secular needs of their parishes. Further, when in *ca.* 1580 the customary bequests of the humbler members of the rural society tended to name the poor rather than the Church as objects of philanthropy, the amount remained small and the form of the gift was normally an outright dole rather than a capital sum, with distribution of income usually minutely ordered. The yeomen and husbandmen together numbered 56.93 per cent of all the donors of the county, though their combined philanthropies account for the very modest proportion of 3.43 per cent of the whole of the charitable funds of Somerset.²²¹

The modest but important contributions of these two classes may be illustrated by a brief account of their charities in two small and thinly populated parishes, neither having more than hamlets at their center and neither being so fortunate as to enjoy the leadership of a rich, a resident, and a responsible gentle family, or the accidental good fortune of having produced a native son who gained a mercantile estate in London, Bristol, or Taunton. The parishes of East

Brent and South Brent, some twenty miles distant from Bristol, meet these requirements and for purposes of this discussion may be treated as an entity. East Brent, with an area of slightly more than five square miles, contained not more than ninety houses even as late as 1782. It had come into the endowments of Glastonbury Abbey in Saxon times, the Abbey holding both the manor and the tithes. At the time of the Dissolution it was granted to the future Duke of Somerset, but later came into the possession of the City of London and later still into the hands of the Whitmores of Shropshire. The church, doubtless built principally with monastic funds, was a large and imposing structure in relation to the simple community to which it ministered. South Brent, lying just to the south, possessed somewhat better soil and was slightly larger, being not quite six square miles in extent. The eighteenth-century historians Collinson and Locke agreed in giving it a population of between 420 and 440, which may not greatly differ from the number of its inhabitants in the period under study. This parish, too, became part of the endowments of Glastonbury at a very early time. The manor was held by the St. Barbe family during much of the Middle Ages, they standing as tenants of the abbot, but none of its members seem to have been resident in the parish in our period. With the expropriation of the monasteries this manor was gained by the future Duke of Somerset, passing through various speculative hands after his attainder until it was purchased by its tenants, the St. Barbe family thereby coming into the ownership of about one-seventh of the whole area.²²²

These simple communities we have properly regarded as a region wanting in opportunity, backward in its institutional development, and marginal within the framework of our analysis of the historical metamorphosis of Somerset. During the whole of our period these parishes acquired a total of no more than £25 of capital funds, and none of this until 1597; neither parish received any aid from London or Bristol and in all gained only £1.7s. in bequests from persons in nearby parishes; neither possessed a charitable donor above the social rank of yeoman, save two resident clergymen, one of these being of yeoman birth, and in both instances the clerical bequest was small. These parishes stood, as it were, squarely on their own bottoms and met their social and economic problems as best they could with their own most limited resources. During our long period, a total of £57.2s. in seventy-six charitable bequests was given by residents of the two parishes. This amount, of which, as we have noted, only £25 was in capital form, was distributed by the donors in the following fashion: poor relief, £17.11s.; social rehabilitation, £11; municipal betterment, £5; religious uses, £23.11s.

A few details will perhaps suggest even more per-

²²¹ Among those counted and describing themselves as husbandmen were certainly many agricultural laborers and landless rural poor generally. The proportion of these men to all donors (56.93 per cent) bears an interesting relation to Professor Tawney's calculation that 59.1 per cent of the population of Gloucestershire in this period belonged to these classes (*Econ. Hist. Rev.* 5: 47, 1934).

²²² Collinson, *Somerset* 1 (2): 195-201.

susively the quality and the conservative nature of the charitable interests of the yeomen and husbandmen who made up almost the whole of the population of South Brent and East Brent. During the period prior to the Reformation, only nine bequests have been recorded, with a total value of £3.9s., of which all but 2s. in doles for the poor had been given for one or another form of church use. Bequests in the parish were particularly numerous during the next interval when, as we have stressed, in more sensitively attuned communities the entire structure of social aspirations was undergoing rapid and dramatic change—but certainly not amongst the yeomen and husbandmen of South and East Brent. During these years there were thirty-nine customary bequests in amounts ranging from 2d. to £1.5s., all made by yeomen or husbandmen, or persons counted as unidentified but almost certainly members of these classes, and all, be it noted, for exclusively religious purposes. The total worth of these outright bequests was only £9.13s., the greater part of which was given to the general uses of the Church. The first break in the pattern of the almost solidly religious preoccupation of the parishes came in 1545 when a yeoman, John Lyninge, of East Brent, after the customary bequests of 4d. to the cathedral church and 1s. to the general uses of his parish church, left the relatively large sum of 13s.4d. for the repair of a causeway at Battleborough.²²³ A decade later another yeoman, of South Brent, likewise ventured boldly beyond the traditional charitable interests of his community, after leaving 2d. to the mother church and 4d. to his own, by a bequest in wheat, valued at 10s., to eleven named poor men of the parish, and by leaving 5s. towards the building of an almshouse in the parish, with the provision that the amount was to be put with an additional 5s. which he had left for the building of a causeway, if this could not be accomplished.²²⁴ In the same year, William Bawdyn, a substantial yeoman of South Brent, made a tiny bequest of 2d. to Wells Cathedral, but left in addition £1 to be divided amongst the poor of his own and two nearby parishes.²²⁵ The clergyman of East Brent, two years later (1553), left 4s. to the general uses of the Church and indicated the severely conservative leadership which he must have supplied his parish by a bequest of £8.13s. for prayers, with, however, the very interesting addition of a legacy of £3.1s. for the relief of poor men and £1 for marriage portions.²²⁶ These last four, all of whom, be it observed, also left at least nominal and customary legacies to the Church, are the only donors among a total of forty-three who ventured beyond the frontiers of religious preoccupation in these two decades of exciting social and cultural change in England.

²²³ *Somerset Rec. Soc.* 40: 217-218, 1925.

²²⁴ *Ibid.* 40: 184, 1925. The almshouse was not built.

²²⁵ *Ibid.* 40: 117-118, 1925. His estate was inventoried at £133.

²²⁶ *Ibid.* 21: 150-151, 1905.

During the Elizabethan period the number of bequests from husbandmen and yeomen fell away sharply in East and South Brent, as they did throughout Somerset. In part, this was certainly due to the decline in the prosperity of the husbandmen in the county and in part, we may believe, because these classes were out of sympathy with the whole course of social change, for the yeoman of Somerset was possibly the most conservative of all we have studied in the several counties. There were fourteen charitable donors, all probably being husbandmen or yeomen, in these parishes during the interval, of whom seven left small bequests wholly for religious purposes and amongst whom there were only two exhibiting the normal course of English philanthropy in these years by designating their legacies wholly for secular purposes. The first of these, a husbandman, Nicholas Goole, of East Brent, left 18s. to the poor of his own and two other parishes,²²⁷ while at the close of the Elizabethan age a yeoman, John Jervys, of South Brent, left the largest single bequest we have found in these parishes during the whole of our period, this consisting of a legacy of £10 as a stock for the care of the poor and £5 for the repair of roads.²²⁸

The charitable history of South and East Brent, which we have sketched in detail to 1601, may be regarded as typical of scores of rural parishes in the county which we have regarded as ill-favored. These were parishes without a strong or responsible local proprietor, merchant, or clergyman who could supply personal and financial leadership in transforming the institutions of a simple community and who could assist powerfully by the foundation of an endowed charity which would ensure in perpetuity the broadening of the base of opportunity and the smoothing of the hard edges of distress. The two Brents simply did the best they could with the human and financial resources at hand.

Somerset did enjoy strong, if somewhat remote, leadership from its upper clergy, particularly during the earliest of our periods when the great church magnates of Glastonbury, Bath, and Wells were unimpaired in wealth, dignity, and influence. In all, the upper clergy of the county, numbering only nineteen donors, contributed the large total of £14,264.8s. to the charitable causes of the county. This represents 12.24 per cent of the whole of the charitable wealth of the county, a proportion of contribution somewhat greater than in any other county examined and exceeded in Somerset only by the gifts of the lower gentry and the merchants. It was, however, heavily concentrated in the period prior to the Reformation settlement, somewhat more than three-fourths (77 per cent) of the whole having been given in these early decades. Only slightly more than half (50.65 per cent) of the total

²²⁷ PCC 35 Watson 1584.

²²⁸ PCC 25 Cobham 1597.

of these benefactions was for religious purposes, the great bulk of the gifts being for ecclesiastical building. Something more than a third (35.59 per cent) was provided for educational endowments, the £3,793.6s. given for school foundations by the churchmen marking them as sensible and enlightened donors. They, as was typical of their kind, were relatively uninterested in the plight of the poor, these needs absorbing only 12.95 per cent of all their benefactions.

It is pleasant to record that the lower clergy of Somerset were likewise relatively prosperous and relatively generous.²²⁹ In total, the benefactions of the 171 members of the class amounted to £6,718.5s., or an average of £39.5s.9d. for each member of the group, which accounts for 5.77 per cent of the whole of the charities of the county. They were as a class roughly comparable to the tradesmen in social significance, if this may be measured by the extent to which a social group undertook the momentous tasks presented by the two centuries under study. The group made over a third of its total contribution in the years prior to the Reformation, the amount falling during the lean Elizabethan years in a most precipitous fashion to only 8.27 per cent of the whole of the charities of the class and then rising again to approximately a third (32.30 per cent) of the class total under the early Stuarts. Over the whole of our period the charities of this class were vested in a most interesting and impressive fashion. Their bequests for religious purposes accounted for not quite a fourth (24.76 per cent) of all their charities, being in percentage terms rather less than those of the county as a whole. During the intensely secular Elizabethan age, it is interesting to note, their legacies for the use of the church almost disappeared, accounting for only 5.01 per cent of the whole of their scant charitable total of £555.11s. during these decades. They were far more concerned than were their great brethren with the poor, with whom they were in daily contact, considerably more than a third (37.57 per cent) of all their contributions being for the relief of the hard-pressed or the indigent. The clergy were likewise persistently and generously interested in the enlargement and betterment of the educational opportunities of the county, these needs absorbing a third (33.75 per cent) of all their charitable gifts and looming importantly in every one of our periods save the last, when the needs of the poor absorbed the amazing proportion of 98.84 per cent of the £776.3s. given to charity by clergymen in these troubled years.

The relatively small merchant class contributing to the charitable funds of Somerset was extremely significant not only for its substantial endowments but likewise for the quality and vigor of its giving. Many of these men, particularly those of the county who described themselves as merchants, perhaps quite doubt-

fully in London terms, were not rich, but whether they were of London or of Taunton, whether their bequests were large or small, they tended to give in a pattern which we can only describe as conforming to that of merchant aspirations throughout England. There were ninety-two of these merchant givers, accounting for only 2.54 per cent of all donors, yet they gave the very large total of £20,735.17s. to the needs of the county. This sum, amounting to 17.79 per cent of the whole of the charitable resources of Somerset, is far larger than that contributed by any other social group save the numerous lower gentry, who provided in all £26,899, of which more than half is represented in the single great charity of Nicholas Wadham. It should be noted, however, that of this large merchant total £14,479.5s. was the gift of thirty-three men certainly identified as London merchants, whose great benefactions we have previously noted in detail. This sum accounts for 69.83 per cent of the whole and in substance means that the massive impact of mercantile aspirations on the institutions of the county was dominantly derived from London wealth. And so it was in every county in England.

The merchants concentrated their charitable wealth in Somerset on the herculean problem of the care and cure of poverty. They gave nearly two-thirds (62.34 per cent) of the whole of their gifts for this purpose and they focused this interest by the endowment of almshouses throughout the county, to which they dedicated almost half (46.11 per cent) of the total of all their benefactions. Their second predominant interest was in education, to which they contributed a total of £4,620, amounting to somewhat more than a fifth of the whole of their benefactions. Throughout our period their gifts to religious uses amounted to only 13.34 per cent, a proportion less than half that of the county at large, but even this scant concern with the religious needs of the shire was almost wholly confined to the period prior to the Reformation. During this early interval pious merchants gave rather more than three-fourths (78.55 per cent) of charitable benefactions totaling £2,261.2s. to religious purposes, considerably less than £1,000 during the whole of the remainder of our period. In the years of the Reformation the proportion of merchant gifts for religious needs fell abruptly to 46.57 per cent, the principal concern being with the general needs of the church, while in the Elizabethan age their support of religion all but vanished, 0.87 per cent having been given for religious uses. Nor was there any revival of enthusiasm. During the early Stuart period, when almost two-thirds of their total benefactions to the charities of the county were made, the needs of the Church commanded not more than 2.89 per cent of the great total of £13,441.1s. given in these years, while the proportion declined slightly in the revolutionary era to 2.33 per cent of all merchant gifts and bequests to charity.

The benefactions made in the county by this small

²²⁹ Indeed, the lower clergy of the county, like their greater brethren, contributed a somewhat larger proportion of charitable wealth than did the class in the other counties in our sample.

group of merchants, numbering only 2.54 per cent of all donors, possessed a qualitative importance far exceeding their very impressive quantitative strength. They were heavily and directly concentrated on the founding of almshouses, the establishment of schools, and the provision of more adequate educational opportunity through the creation of scholarship endowments. The great bulk of the gifts of this class came from Londoners, natives of Somerset, who in their wills or late in their careers made careful provision for the creation of institutions which reflected and secured the aspirations which were by the accession of Queen Elizabeth so clearly and effectively defined by men of this group. As we have shown, approximately a third (33) of these merchants were from London, but they gave a total of £14,479.5s. of the amount provided for Somerset by this class, or 69.83 per cent of the whole.²³⁰ But it is important to note that whether these merchants were rich or relatively poor, whether they were drawn from the great livery companies of London or the humbler fraternities of Taunton, their aspirations for their age and for the future of their society bear a very close similarity and seem to have been cast in the same mold.

If there can be any such thing as an average social group, the tradesmen and burghers were almost its perfect exemplars. The 171 tradesmen constituted 4.71 per cent of all donors in the county and contributed 4.18 per cent of the whole of its charities, while the "additional burghers," most of whom must have been tradesmen, numbered 1.76 per cent of all donors and gave 1.77 per cent of the charities of their county. The tradesmen of the county gave in all £4,876.18s. to its charitable needs, of which a large proportion (43 per cent), because of two unusually generous benefactions, was provided during the first of our periods. The consequence is that on balance a very large proportion (43.39 per cent) of the total gifts of the class was made for religious purposes, though it should be observed that in the Elizabethan era such benefactions all but dried up, only 2.15 per cent having been given during these decades for the several religious uses. These men, whose average charitable benefaction was only £28.10s.5d., over our whole period gave 40.30 per cent of their contribution for the relief of the poor, of which considerably more was designated for poor relief than for almshouse endowments, the latter being somewhat beyond their modest resources. As we might expect, they were far more interested in schemes for social rehabilitation, to which they gave 8.44 per cent of all their benefactions, than was the county at large (2.66 per cent), their endowments for apprenticeship plans and their loan funds being particularly notable. But they did not possess the social vision of the great

merchants, who were so determinedly interested in the building of the educational institutions of the county, contributions of the tradesmen for this purpose amounting to only 4.10 per cent of the whole of their gifts.

A relatively small group of sixty-four urban dwellers can be identified only as "additional burghers," they being men who had held some municipal office, were freemen of their towns, or possessed a substance which would suggest that they were in fact either tradesmen or small merchants. The structure of the aspirations of this group bears a close similarity to that of the known tradesmen, particularly when the large and statistically eccentric religious benefactions of the tradesmen during the first of our periods is taken into account. On balance, the burghers gave 59.84 per cent of all their charitable donations to poor relief, with outright care of the indigent looming far more significantly than almshouse endowments in their scheme of interests. Well over a third (35.01 per cent) of their benefactions were for the maintenance of religious institutions, with prayers and the general needs of the Church commanding most of their concern in this particular. They were almost wholly uninterested in the grammar schools being founded in the county by the great philanthropists of the era, only a single gift of £6 being recorded from this group for the support of education. They were evidently a moderately prosperous and relatively simple group of town dwellers with limited interests and aspirations, who stand *vis-à-vis* the merchants in much the same relation as did the yeomanry to the gentry in the rural reaches of the county.

We likewise possess information concerning the charitable bequests of a substantial group of 123 artisans of Somerset. These men—the tanners, the bakers, the weavers, the tailors, the molders, and the rest—gave on the average the surprisingly large sum of £1.2s.1d. to charity. Yet their total benefactions comprise not more than 0.12 per cent of the whole of the benefactions of the county. Their concern was naturally principally with the poor, to whom they gave, almost wholly in the form of small doles, half (49.96 per cent) of their bequests. The general needs of their churches constituted their second great interest, 18.75 per cent of all their gifts having been made for this purpose, with religious uses as a whole absorbing well over a third (36.10 per cent) of all their benefactions, but this proportion declined to 9.45 per cent during the stern years of Elizabethan secularism.

There were, as well, thirty-three members of the professional classes who made a substantial contribution to the social and charitable institutions of Somerset. These men, comprising 0.91 per cent of the donors of the shire, gave £10,547.9s. to its charities, or 9.05 per cent of the whole. This large total, only slightly smaller than that given by the upper gentry, was provided by fifteen lawyers, six doctors, five apothecaries, six public officials, and a teacher, of

²³⁰ An additional and very considerable total of nearly £ 6,000 was given by Londoners who were almost certainly merchants. (*Vide ante*, 78, for the social composition of London donors to the county.)

whom eight in all, and they by far the most substantial contributors, were Somerset-born Londoners. The charitable interests of this enlightened group were more heavily concentrated on the care and relief of poverty than those of any other body of substantial men in the county. In all, they provided £7,504.17s. for poor relief, of which the great sum of £7,064, amounting to two-thirds (66.97 per cent) of the whole contribution of the class, was for the endowment of almshouses. The needs of the Church absorbed a surprisingly high proportion (22.62 per cent) of their benefactions, though it should be observed that the gifts of this social group for religious purposes were inconsequential after the accession of Elizabeth. They gave relatively little to the educational institutions of the county (3.52 per cent), while their contribution to the remaining great charitable heads was small and was scattered in an ineffective fashion. The notable and the persistent concern of this class with the problem of poverty absorbed almost the whole of its generous contribution to the maturing social institutions of Somerset.

There remain 412 charitable donors of uncertain social status. This group comprised 11.35 per cent of all the benefactors of the county, while its contribution of £9,965.2s. accounts for 8.55 per cent of the whole of Somerset charities. The amount and structure of their gifts would suggest that in a probably meaningless average sense they were rather above the quality of yeomen when they were rural dwellers and of the rank and wealth of tradesmen when they were townsmen. Their concern with the problem of poverty substantially exceeded that of the county as a whole, about 56 per cent of all their benefactions having been given for poor relief, with a heavy emphasis on outright gifts or endowments for household relief within the parishes. Their interest in the various religious needs was typical of the county, the group vesting 28.10 per cent of all their gifts for these purposes as compared with 27.35 per cent for Somerset as a

whole. They gave a relatively niggardly proportion of all their benefactions to the needs of education (7.88 per cent), while, a substantial total contribution of £490 to hospitals aside, their gifts for social rehabilitation and municipal betterment were not notable. Despite their social anonymity, it seems clear that these were men and women of "middling" wealth and position whose aspirations for the welfare of their county may be regarded as reasonably typical of Somerset at large.

All manner of men had, then, made some measure of contribution to the great achievement which had been wrought in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries by the generality of private men. We have seen that the structure of aspirations in Bristol and in Somerset were quite different, that the sentiments which moved men to noble and healing actions were subject to very different velocities of change when a thrusting urban society is compared with a more cautious, though neighboring, rural society. Yet both societies were ministering to the needs of men with a sensitivity and an instinct of responsibility that betokened a fundamental change in the culture and the institutions of a whole society. It is quite clear, whether in Somerset or in Bristol, that the outpouring of wealth from the merchants and gentry, classes almost precocious in their understanding of the requirements laid by historical change on the society, had opened up the way and had lent sustenance to the quiet revolution which had occurred in the essential structure of English life. But other classes had followed, a little more slowly and, necessarily, much more hesitantly, as the institutional structure of modern Bristol and Somerset was fabricated in the course of our period. A kind of miracle was brought to pass by men who were certain in the thrust and temper of their aspirations, who knew what they wanted the world inhabited by their children to be, and who possessed the substance, the dedication, and the generosity to bring that world into being.

APPENDIX

NOTE REGARDING THE COMPOSITION OF *TABLE I* and *TABLE II*

Difficulties of tabular representation make it inconvenient to present in full the data included in the first two tables. In our discussion in the text, however, full treatment is given to the data under each of the sub-heads as well as for the great charitable heads. There are in all twenty-four categories (sub-heads) under which we have listed charities, these being in turn gathered under the five great heads which are presented in the tables following. The full classification is as follows:

POOR

- Outright relief
- Almshouses
- Charity General
- Aged

SOCIAL REHABILITATION

- Prisons
- Loans
- Workhouses and stocks
- Apprenticeship schemes
- Sick and hospitals
- Marriage subsidies

MUNICIPAL BETTERMENTS

- General uses
- Companies for public benefit
- Parks and recreation
- Public works (Roads, *etc.*)

EDUCATION

- Schools
- Colleges and Universities
- Libraries (non-university)
- Scholarships and fellowships

RELIGION

- Church general
- Prayers
- Church repairs
- Maintenance of the clergy
- Puritan lectureships
- Church building (estimated)

For a full discussion of the categories employed and a synthesis of the statistical evidence for the whole group of ten counties, *Vide*, Jordan, *Philanthropy in England*, 40-53, 369-375.

TABLE 1

BRISTOL

	Poor	Social rehabilitation	Municipal betterments	Education	Religion	Totals
1480-1490	£ 33. 0.				£ 606.19.	£ 639.19.
1491-1500	2,153. 1.	3. 0.	24. 7.		1,456.10.	3,636.18.
1501-1510	100. 3.	8.10.	1. 0.		1,258.16.	1,368. 9.
1511-1520	97. 7.		18. 0.		1,907. 5.	2,022.12.
1521-1530	531. 9.		9. 0.		975. 8.	1,515.17.
1531-1540	2,950. 4.	750. 0.	807. 0.	1,335. 0.	1,806. 6.	7,648.10.
Pre-Reformation Percentage	5,865. 4. (34.85%)	761.10. (4.52%)	859. 7. (5.11%)	1,335. 0. (7.93%)	8,011. 4. (47.59%)	16,832. 5. (18.29%)
1541-1550	1,420.14.	509.13.	1,849.13.	123. 0.	166. 8.	4,069. 8.
1551-1560	3,507. 0.	37. 2.	2. 5.	80. 0.	255. 6.	3,881.13.
Reformation Percentage	4,927.14. (61.98%)	546.15. (6.88%)	1,851.18. (23.29%)	203. 0. (2.55%)	421.14. (5.30%)	7,951. 1. (8.64%)
1561-1570	328.18.	2,005.3.	2,891.10.	2. 0.	50. 4.	5,277.15.
1571-1580	1,048.10.	231.13.	37.14.	68. 0.	9. 6.	1,395. 3.
1581-1590	2,833.15.	341.17.	172. 0.	11,230. 0.	25.17.	14,603. 9.
1591-1600	4,088. 3.	670. 0.	153. 0.	1,351. 7.	229. 6.	6,491.16.
Elizabethan Percentage	8,299. 6. (29.89%)	3,248.13. (11.70%)	3,254. 4. (11.72%)	12,651. 7. (45.56%)	314.13. (1.13%)	27,768. 3. (30.17%)
1601-1610	1,891. 0.	447. 0.	92. 3.	1,140. 0.	159. 3.	3,729. 6.
1611-1620	1,193.16.	430. 0.	66. 0.	251. 0.	20. 8.	1,961. 4.
1621-1630	13,125.18.	1,205. 0.	2,000. 0.	3,315. 0.	1,449.10.	21,095. 8.
1631-1640	3,627. 2.	1,790. 3.	166.13.	260. 0.	1,156. 9.	7,000. 7.
Early Stuart Percentage	19,837.16. (58.72%)	3,872. 3. (11.46%)	2,324.16. (6.88%)	4,966. 0. (14.70%)	2,785.10. (8.24%)	33,786. 5. (36.71%)
1641-1650	716.10.	23. 0.	70. 0.		45. 2.	854.12.
1651-1660	2,660. 0.	1,140. 0.	18. 0.	480. 0.	552. 0.	4,850. 0.
Revolutionary Percentage	3,376.10. (59.19%)	1,163. 0. (20.39%)	88. 0. (1.54%)	480. 0. (8.41%)	597. 2. (10.47%)	5,704.12. (6.20%)
Totals	£42,306.10s. (45.96%)	£9,592. 1s. (10.42%)	£8,378. 5s. (9.10%)	£19,635. 7s. (21.33%)	£12,130. 3s. (13.18%)	£92,042. 6s.

TABLE 2

SOMERSET

	Poor	Social rehabilitation	Municipal betterments	Education	Religion	Totals
1480-1490	£ 127.13.	£ 353.16.	£ 53. 7.	£ 26.13.	£ 3,503.15.	£ 4,065. 4.
1491-1500	20.16.	0.12.	22.10.	828. 0.	2,428. 7.	3,300. 5.
1501-1510	256. 0.	7. 7.	75. 6.	724.19.	6,503. 7.	7,566.19.
1511-1520	771.18.		61.10.	1.11.	3,425.17.	4,260.16.
1521-1530	760. 4.	0.10.	1.12.	4,299. 9.	3,353.15.	8,415.10.
1531-1540	1,341.10.	37. 3.	44.16.	48. 0.	1,810.15.	3,282. 4.
Pre-Reformation Percentage	3,278. 1. (10.61%)	399. 8. (1.29%)	259. 1. (0.84%)	5,928.12. (19.19%)	21,025.16. (68.06%)	30,890.18. (26.51%)
1541-1550	452. 3.	114. 5.	47. 4.	956. 0.	778. 9.	2,348. 1.
1551-1560	3,021. 5.	183.10.	140. 9.	1,193. 1.	1,165.18.	5,704. 3.
Reformation Percentage	3,473. 8. (43.14%)	297.15. (3.70%)	187.13. (2.33%)	2,149. 1. (26.69%)	1,944. 7. (24.15%)	8,052. 4. (6.91%)
1561-1570	463.15.	87.18.	34.13.	383. 3.	265.10.	1,234.19.
1571-1580	949.19.	263.13.	5.16.		194.18.	1,414. 6.
1581-1590	2,435. 8.	333.13.	2. 5.	16. 6.	356.18.	3,144.10.
1591-1600	1,716.13.	126. 5.	146. 0.	120. 0.	213. 8.	2,322. 6.
Elizabethan Percentage	5,565.15. (68.58%)	811. 9. (10.00%)	188.14. (2.33%)	519. 9. (6.40%)	1,030.14. (12.70%)	8,116. 1. (6.96%)
1601-1610	4,346. 4.	297. 4.	10. 5.	14,926. 6.	481. 1.	20,061. 0.
1611-1620	14,388. 1.	181. 0.	80.12.	3,796. 0.	3,982. 6.	22,377.19.
1621-1630	7,232. 5.	162.10.	221.10.	731.14.	1,989. 9.	10,337. 8.
1631-1640	4,605. 2.	414. 8.	3. 0.	612. 5.	506. 9.	6,141. 4.
Early Stuart Percentage	30,571.12. (51.89%)	1,055. 2. (1.79%)	265. 7. (0.45%)	20,066. 5. (34.06%)	6,959. 5. (11.81%)	58,917.11. (50.56%)
1641-1650	4,418.16.	118. 0.	5. 0.		228.16.	4,770.12.
1651-1660	3,193. 6.	419. 8.		1,495. 0.	676.16.	5,784.10.
Revolutionary Percentage	7,612. 2. (72.12%)	537. 8. (5.09%)	5. 0. (0.05%)	1,495. 0. (14.16%)	905.12. (8.58%)	10,555. 2. (9.06%)
Totals	£50,500.18s. (43.34%)	£3,101. 2s. (2.66%)	£905.15s. (0.78%)	£30,158. 7s. (25.88%)	£31,865.14s. (27.35%)	£116,531.16s.

TABLE 3
SOMERSET
STRUCTURE OF CHARITIES IN THE FAVORED PARISHES

	Poor	Social rehabilitation	Municipal betterments	Education	Religion	Totals
	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s	£ s
Ashill*	1,472.17.			14,000. 0.	27.17.	15,500.14.
Backwell	534. 3.	3. 0.			192.12.	729.15.
Bath	1,829.13.	650. 0.	38.3.	764. 0.	5,434. 3.	8,715.19.
Beckington	130. 8.	25. 7.	9. 0.		239. 7.	404. 2.
Bishop's Lydeard	580. 2.				2. 2.	582. 4.
Bridgwater	925. 4.	155. 0.	131.12.	406. 0.	267. 7.	1,885. 3.
Broadway	568. 4.	200. 3.			1.17.	770. 4.
Bruton	5,199.10.	25. 0.	2. 0.	3,701.13.	1,357.18.	10,286. 1.
Cannington	569. 6.		2. 0.		104. 6.	675.12.
Chard	259. 9.	30. 0.			210. 6.	499.15.
Chew Magna	423.17.	100. 0.		20. 0.	118.17.	662.14.
Coker (East & West)	684.14.	0.10.	0.10.		19. 9.	705. 3.
Compton Dando	150. 9.				536.19.	687. 8.
Crewkerne	530.10.	5. 0.	2. 7.	1,220. 7.	70.10.	1,828.14.
Crocombe	7. 0.				1,071.16.	1,078.16.
Curry (East & North)	18. 2.			636. 0.	286. 9.	940.11.
Donyatt	1,043.11.				21. 8.	1,064.19.
East Harptree	423. 5.			250. 0.	16.14.	689.19.
Fivehead	6.17.				1,092. 0.	1,098.17.
Frome	943.11.		0. 7.	220. 0.	534. 9.	1,698. 7.
Glastonbury	1,419.13.	12. 0.	28.16.	36.12.	723. 4.	2,220. 5.
Ilminster	257.13.		1.16.	944.18.	113.12.	1,317.19.
Ilton	1,291. 3.				2. 8.	1,293.11.
Keynsham	749. 9.			500. 0.	1,010.11.	2,260. 0.
Langport	1. 5.				408.15.	410. 0.
Long Ashton	468. 8.	3. 2.	40. 0.		1,355. 4.	1,866.14.
Mells	264.10.			12. 3.	362. 2.	638.15.
Minehead	717.17.		4. 7.		75. 0.	797. 4.
Newton St. Loe	600. 0.				0. 3.	600. 3.
Orchard Portman	905. 3.	0.10.			6.16.	912. 9.
Shepton Mallet	203. 0.	0. 5.	20. 0.	360. 0.	70.16.	654. 1.
Somerton	1,117. 9.				13.11.	1,131. 0.
Staple Fitzpaine	1,122. 1.				1. 8.	1,123. 9.
Stogursey	712. 9.				103.19.	816. 8.
Stoke	1. 0.			420. 0.	0.17.	421.17.
Taunton	10,938.12.	133. 9.	131. 3.	2,971. 6.	1,872. 1.	16,046.11.
Widcombe	0. 1.				400.14.	400.15.
Wellington	1,456. 4.	110. 0.		122. 0.	39.19.	1,728. 3.
Wells	3,226. 3.	354. 0.	51. 3.	1,678. 6.	6,250.15.	11,560. 7.
Wiveliscombe	511.13.	100. 0.			5. 5.	616.18.
Wootton Courtney	505. 9.				4. 2.	509.11.
Totals	£42,769.14s.	£1,907. 6s.	£463. 4s.	£28,263. 5s.	£24,427. 8s.	£97,830.17s.

* The enormous total of £14,000 included for education under Ashill is of course Wadham's foundation at Oxford. It is included because of the specific benefits prescribed for Somerset.

TABLE 4
SOMERSET
DEPTH OF GIVING BY PERSONS OF KNOWN STATUS

No. of donors in class	Class	Gifts of £0-£9.19s.	No. of donors 0-£9.19s.	Gifts of £10-£19.19s.	No. of donors £10-£19.19s.	Gifts of £20-£99.19s.	No. of donors £20-£99.19s.	Gifts of £100-£499.19s.	No. of donors £100-£499.19s.	Gifts of £500-£999.19s.	No. of donors £500-£999.19s.	Gifts of £1000 and over	No. of donors £1000 and over	Total of contributions
4	Crown	—	—	—	—	—	—	£ 486. 0s.	3	£ 653. 0s.	1	—	—	£ 1,139. 0s.
16	Nobility	£ 5. 0s.	1	—	—	£ 370. 0s.	11	£ 320. 0s.	2	£ 973. 0s.	1	£ 1,185. 11s.	1	£ 2,853. 11s.
90	Upper Gentry	£ 92. 8s.	26	£ 91.15s.	7	£ 1,255. 0s.	30	£ 3,438. 6s.	19	£ 4,120.16s.	5	£ 3,352. 0s.	3	£ 12,350. 5s.
368	Lower Gentry	£ 607.13s.	232	£ 386. 7s.	30	£ 2,828.10s.	72	£ 4,957.10s.	29	£ 2,879. 0s.	4	£ 15,240. 0s.	1	£ 26,899. 0s.
764	Yeomen	£1,432. 7s.	707	£ 331. 5s.	25	£ 1,051. 4s.	28	£ 528.10s.	4	—	—	—	—	£ 3,343. 6s.
1,302	Husbandmen	£ 573. 3s.	1,297	£ 45.10s.	4	£ 22. 1s.	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	£ 640.14s.
19	Upper Clergy	£ 2.15s.	1	—	—	£ 36. 0s.	1	£ 2,364.14s.	9	£ 2,659.19s.	4	£ 9,151. 0s.	4	£ 14,264. 8s.
170	Lower Clergy	£ 276. 2s.	105	£ 366.12s.	26	£ 947.12s.	23	£ 2,435.19s.	12	£ 2,692. 0s.	4	—	—	£ 6,718. 5s.
92	Merchants	£ 83.14s.	27	£ 172.15s.	13	£ 921. 9s.	21	£ 4,974. 0s.	21	£ 3,593.19s.	5	£ 10,990. 0s.	5	£ 20,735.17s.
171	Tradesmen	£ 235.11s.	115	£ 207.15s.	14	£ 1,301. 7s.	28	£ 2,583.18s.	13	£ 548. 7s.	1	—	—	£ 4,876.18s.
64	Burghers	£ 83. 7s.	20	£ 201.14s.	16	£ 920.16s.	22	£ 856.10s.	6	—	—	—	—	£ 2,062. 7s.
123	Artisans	£ 89.17s.	119	£ 45.17s.	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	£ 135.14s.
33	Professions	£ 4.19s.	13	£ 25.13s.	2	£ 351.11s.	8	£ 1,385. 7s.	6	—	—	£ 8,742.19s.	4	£ 10,547. 9s.
3,216	Totals	£3,523.16s. (3.31%)	2,663 (82.80%)	£1,875. 3s. (1.76%)	141 (4.38%)	£10,055.10s. (9.44%)	245 (22.83%)	£24,330.14s. (22.83%)	124 (3.86%)	£18,120. 1s. (17.00%)	25 (0.78%)	£48,661.10s. (45.66%)	18 (0.56%)	£106,566.14s.

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